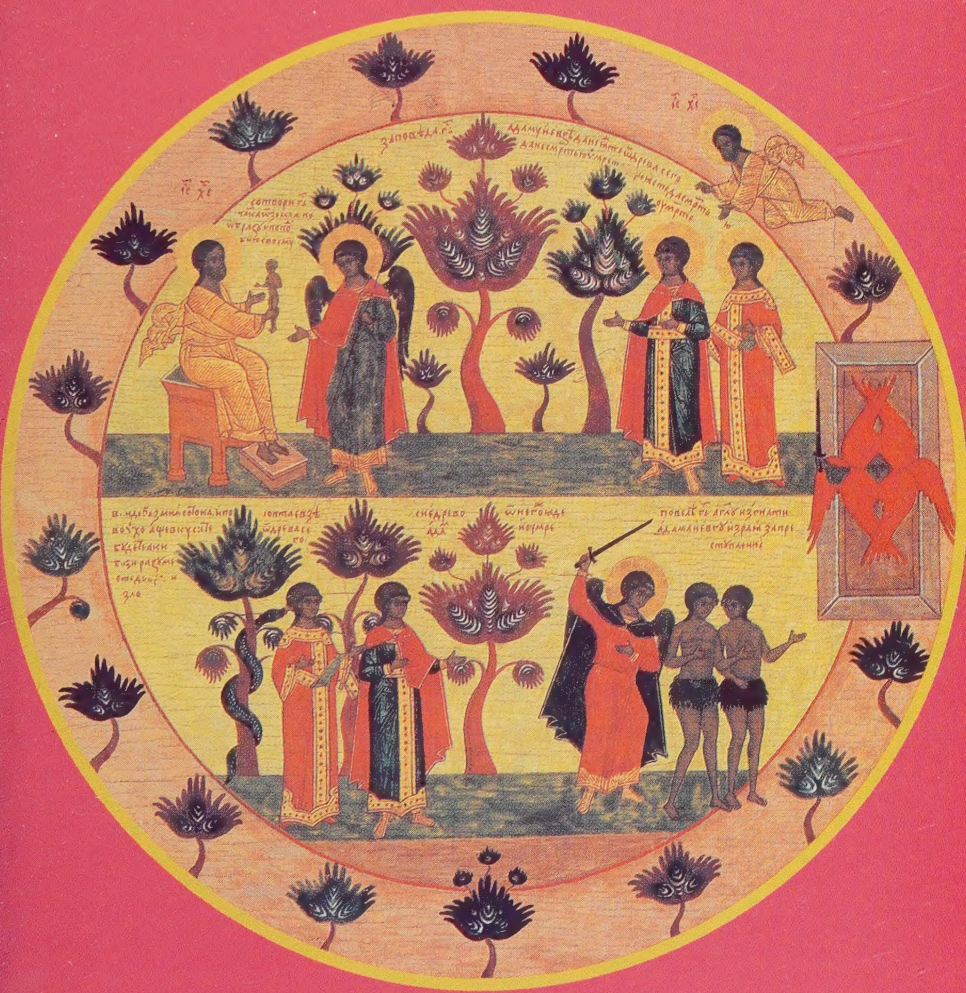



The First-Created MAN



ST. SYMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN



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Orthodox Theological Texts

- No. 1. The Orthodox Veneration of Mary the Birthgiver of God
by Saint John Maximovitch
- No. 2. The First-Created Man (The Sin of Adam)
by Saint Symeon the New Theologian
- No. 3. The Place of Blessed Augustine in the Orthodox Church
by Father Seraphim Rose
- No. 4. Guidance Toward Spiritual Life
by Saints Barsanuphius and John

THE FIRST-CREATED MAN



Adam naming the animals (detail). Fresco by Theophanes in the catholicon of the Monastery of St. Nicholas Anapavsas, Meteora, Greece.

The First-Created Man

*SEVEN HOMILIES
by St. Symeon the New Theologian*

*Selected and translated, with an Introduction
by Fr. Seraphim Rose*

*Translated from the Russian edition
of St. Theophan the Recluse*

*New edition to commemorate the
centennial of St. Theophan's repose*



ST. HERMAN OF ALASKA BROTHERHOOD

1994

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ST. THEOPHAN THE RECLUSE
Reposed on the Feast of Theophany, 1894.
Commemorated by the Church on January 10.

PREFACE

to the Second Edition

THIS YEAR marks the centennial of the repose of St. Theophan the Recluse (†1894), a modern Holy Father who had great love for St. Symeon the New Theologian (†1022) and translated two volumes of his works into Russian. It is from his editions of St. Symeon's works that the present English translation by Fr. Seraphim Rose has been made.

The pastoral fervency of both St. Theophan and St. Symeon, separated by a millennium of triumphant Christianity in a militant world, is more needed today than ever before—because such fervency in Orthodox Christians is rapidly evaporating from the face of the earth. Both these Holy Fathers had mystical experience which enabled them to express Christian truths out of direct contact with God. Both of them warred against complacency and adherence to the letter of the law on the part of their ecclesiastical contemporaries, and for this they both endured suffering and ostracization during their lifetimes, only to achieve, after their deaths, tremendous influence on Christian society. Today, as in the past, they can serve as essential teachers of experiential Christianity: a Christianity of the heart and of heroic action, rather than of blind followers who are afraid of not being accepted and thus sink into inactivity.

The young generation, to whom this book was initially directed when it first came out fifteen years ago, is now emerg-

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ing from the nihilistic nightmare of contemporary subhumanity, and to some extent is even responsible for this second edition of St. Symeon's homilies in English. Out of this young generation of today, there is a rising army of "desperados" who are fed up with Christianity (including Orthodox Christianity) that is satisfied with the institutionalized, psychological state of feeling "safe" in a religion. To this army of potential heroes for Christ, the God-revealed teachings of St. Symeon, together with the whole literary inheritance of St. Theophan, give ammunition for the combat of the Church militant upon earth, as She progresses toward the Church triumphant in heaven.

St. Theophan the Recluse translated these homilies of St. Symeon because he felt the urgent need to proclaim to the common, uninitiated reader the true purpose of man's existence. This urgency was picked up in our own times by Fr. Seraphim Rose (†1982), who selected these homilies out of the same burning desire to transmit their message to lost souls. These lost souls are you and I, dear reader, and it will be expected of us to pass on that message to other lost ones.

Fr. Seraphim, who labored over this book, was a monk who knew the purpose both of his life and of Christianity upon this earth. He understood that the Evil One is working to prevent contemporary mankind from making the free choice of salvation, and that this is being done by eliminating the Orthodox teaching on the first-created man, from which comes the whole Christian philosophy on what man is and what God created him for. In the teaching on man's creation, his sin and his redemption by Jesus Christ, is contained the content of the Christian faith: the precise knowledge of our means of salvation and of attaining the Heavenly Kingdom—to which may all the lost souls of today, including ourselves, find their everlasting home. Amen.

Abbot Herman
St. Paisius Abbey

INTRODUCTION

The Teaching of St. Symeon the New Theologian

BY FR. SERAPHIM ROSE OF PLATINA

ONE OF THE MOST beloved Holy Fathers today among Orthodox Christians, certainly in the Russian Church, is St. Symeon the New Theologian, one of the only three great Fathers whom the Church has granted the title of "Theologians" or speakers about God par excellence. St. John the Evangelist is the paramount Theologian of apostolic times; St. Gregory of Nazianzus (†390) is the most exalted Theologian of the golden age of Patristic literature; and St. Symeon (†1022) is the great Theologian of later times—the second Christian millennium.

Although separated from us now by nearly a thousand years, St. Symeon's Christian world was not so different from ours as might appear from the difference of epoch. By his time Orthodox Christianity had become well established; outwardly it has scarcely changed at all in the centuries since then. But therefore it was the more easily taken for granted, and St. Symeon might well be speaking to our own times when he emphasizes the need to return to the freshness of authentic Christian experience and not merely depend on the outward forms of church life, which are not soul-saving in themselves, but require conscious appropriation by believers. Unfortu-

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nately, this spiritual emphasis of his is often misused in our own day to defend a false "mysticism" and false "gifts of the Holy Spirit" which are emotional (at best) rather than spiritual and would only have evoked his righteous wrath. The more ecstatically "mystical" of St. Symeon's writings (his "Hymns"), as recent Fathers have warned us, are better left untouched by us Christians of the latter times who are too immersed in our own passions and filth of this most debased and evil of epochs.

But there are many writings of St. Symeon which are accessible to and appropriate for us, the last Christians—and particularly those which arouse and inspire us to conscious and fervent awareness of the basic dogmas of our Faith. Among these writings are the Saint's Homilies on Adam, the first-created world, and the future age.

Orthodox Christians today all too often have rather vague notions of the future age of blessedness which is the goal of our Christian life on earth; various chiliastic heresies and ideas, promising some kind of "paradise on earth," are very much in the air today and exert much influence, often unconsciously, on Christians who are not fully aware of their Faith and its goal. Bound up with this, and often largely to blame for it, is a poor knowledge of the *beginnings of man* and the universe—the creation, the first-created world, Adam and his fall; the agnostic and atheistic philosophies of beginnings so common today have done much to confuse in this regard even well-meaning Orthodox Christians.

The authentic Orthodox Patristic view of man's beginning and end is thus sorely needed to put in order the disarray of private opinions about these matters. St. Symeon's Homilies are one of the primary sources of this view.

And yet, St. Symeon speaks with such boldness and assurance on these subjects that one may stop and ask: how does he know all this? We have become used to a "knowledge" based on

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speculation and guesses, particularly on subjects as remote from ordinary experience as the first-created world and the future age. Today's scientists make their speculations on the beginnings of man and the universe based on uniformitarian projections from their present fragmentary discoveries and imperfect knowledge; today's "theologians" (even many who are Orthodox) usually make just as speculative projections based on their imperfect reading of the book of Genesis and perhaps some Holy Fathers or some poorly assimilated scientific information. But this is all the sphere of imperfect human wisdom, a mixture of knowledge and ignorance; how, then, does St. Symeon give us the teaching which is authentically Christian, and not a mere result of speculation and guessing?

St. Symeon speaks from divine revelation. First, his basis is always scriptural—but we are astonished to see a depth of meaning in his use of scriptural quotations which we would never have seen by ourselves. And this is because, second, he speaks *from personal experience*.

St. Gregory the Sinaite (†1346), another saint of more recent times who attained the heights of spiritual life and thus spoke with certainty of matters which the rest of us see only dimly, describes in one passage of his writings the "eight primary visions" of the state of perfect prayer. These visions are: God, the Angelic powers, the composition of visible things, the condescension of the Word (the Incarnation), the general resurrection, the Second Coming of Christ, eternal torments, the eternal Kingdom of Heaven. The objects of these visions, St. Gregory teaches, "are clearly beheld and known by those who have attained by grace complete purity of mind" ("Chapters on Commandments and Dogmas," 130, in the Russian *Philokalia*). Thus he, and other saints who have attained to this state, can speak at first hand of the mysteries of our Faith which they have beheld in divine vision—even though they can say

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rather little of them to us who have no direct experience of them, even as St. Paul, after being raised in vision to the third heaven, had chiefly to emphasize how unutterable was what he heard there (II Cor. 12:4), and how far above ordinary human experience are those things that await the Christian in the coming age (I Cor. 2:9).

Among these "primary visions" which the greatest saints behold on earth are, not only the future age of torments (hell) and blessedness (heaven), but even "the composition of visible things" (obviously a mystical vision and not a scientific measurement of them!). Another saint of the most exalted spiritual life, St. Isaac the Syrian (7th century), in one passage of his Homilies, gives us a hint of his own experience of this. In describing how the soul is enraptured at the thought of the future age of incorruption, St. Isaac writes: "And from this, one is already exalted in one's mind to that which preceded the composition of the world, when there was no creature, nor heaven, nor earth, nor Angels, nothing of that which was brought into being, and to how God, solely by His good will, suddenly brought everything from non-being into being, and everything stood before Him in perfection" (Homily 21, Russian edition; Homily 85, Greek edition).

And thus we see to whom we should turn for a true interpretation of the first and last things: the surest interpreters of Genesis and the Apocalypse are those Holy Fathers who, like Moses and St. John the Evangelist themselves, beheld the beginning and the end in the state of divine vision. St. Isaac the Syrian describes in another Homily how this knowledge based on faith and vision surpasses ordinary human knowledge. "Knowledge preserves the bounds of nature, but faith goes above nature.... The capabilities of knowledge for 5000 years, or a little more or less than this (i.e., the time from the creation to the Incarnation of Christ, which differs somewhat in the

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Greek and Hebrew Old Testament chronologies), governed the world, and man in no way could raise his head from the earth and acknowledge his Creator, until our Faith shone forth and delivered us from the darkness of earthly doing and vain submission to the empty soaring of the mind. And even now when we have found an imperturbable sea and an inexhaustible treasure, again we desire to turn away toward tiny springs. There is no knowledge that would not be poor, no matter how much it might be enriched; but the treasures of faith can be contained neither by the heaven nor by the earth" (Homily 25, Russian edition; Homily 62, Greek edition).

St. Symeon is one of the Church's great seers of these treasures of faith; he speaks of them with such certainty precisely because he has seen them. His profound homilies on Adam and the future age are of special value to Orthodox Christians because they give the theological foundation of the Christian life of struggle: the original state of man from which Adam fell tells us of our deepest nature, of which our present fallen nature is a corruption that is to be overcome; and the future state of blessedness is the goal to which our Christian struggle is aimed, and to which we can attain, by God's grace, even despite our fallen state.

The following translation of St. Symeon's celebrated Homilies where these matters are most clearly discussed, has been made from the Russian translation of Bishop Theophan the Recluse (Moscow, 1892). This great Father of the 19th century made it a principle to publish only what is of practical value for Orthodox Christian strugglers; thus, in his translations of St. Symeon we have an additional guarantee of the authenticity and value of the teaching which is to be found there. May it serve now to inspire—in a sober-minded way—the Christians of these last times in the narrow path that leads to salvation and deification.



ST. SYMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN
(949-1022)

A contemporary icon from Greece.

THE LIFE OF
Saint Symeon
the New Theologian

BY HIS DISCIPLE NICETAS STETHATOS
*As Condensed by Bishop Theophan the Recluse**

1. HIS LIFE IN THE WORLD

SAINT SYMEON was born (in 949) in the Paphlagonian village of Galatia, of renowned and wealthy parents. His father's name was Basil, and his mother's Theophano. From his childhood he manifested both great talents and a meek and reverent manner, with a love for solitude. When he reached the age of a youth his parents sent him to Constantinople to relatives who were eminent at the court. There he was given over to study, and soon he passed through the so-called grammatical courses. He should then have gone over to the philosophical courses, but he refused to do this, fearing to be drawn away into something unprofitable by the influence of his companions. The uncle with whom he lived did not force him, but hastened to lead him into the path of public service, which in itself is quite a strict

* In the introduction to his translation of St. Symeon's Homilies, Moscow, 1892.

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discipline for those who are attentive. He presented him to the brother-emperors Basil and Constantine Porphyrogenetes, and they included him among the number of courtiers.

But it was a small thing for Saint Symeon that he had become a member of the imperial council. His desire was fixed on something different, and his heart was elsewhere. Even during the time of his studies, he had become acquainted with the Elder Symeon, who was called the Reverent. He often visited him and made use of his counsel in everything. With all the more freedom, and at the same time necessity, did he do this now. His sincere desire was, as quickly as possible, to devote himself to the life of renunciation of the world. But the Elder persuaded him to have patience, waiting until his good intention should become ripe and more deeply rooted, because he was still very young (about 21 years old). He continued, however, to counsel and guide him, preparing him gradually for monastic life even in the midst of worldly cares.

Saint Symeon himself did not love to give himself over to luxuries, and together with his usual labors of self-mortification, he devoted all of his free time to reading and prayer. The Elder furnished him with books, telling him which passages in them he should pay special attention to. Once when giving him a book of the writings of Mark the Ascetic, the Elder indicated to him various utterances in them, counselling him to reflect most carefully on them and to direct his conduct according to them.

Among the number of these utterances was the following: "If you desire to have always a soul-saving guidance, pay heed to your conscience and without fail do what it will instil in you." This utterance Saint Symeon took so much to heart that it was as if it had come from the mouth of God Himself, and he made a rule to pay strict heed to and obey his conscience, believing that, since it was the voice of God in the heart, it

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would instil in him always what was soul-saving. From this time on he gave himself over entirely to prayer and instruction in the Divine Scriptures, keeping vigil until midnight and eating only bread and water, and taking them only as much as was needed to support life. Thus he became ever more immersed in himself and in the realm of God. At this time he was vouchsafed the grace-given illumination which he himself describes in his Homily on faith, speaking as if it were some other youth. Here the grace of God granted him to taste more fully the sweetness of life according to God and by this means cut off the taste for everything earthly.

2. THE ACCOUNT OF THE YOUTH GEORGE*

There lived in Constantinople a youth by the name of George, about twenty years old. All this was in our days, in our own memory. He had a handsome face, and in his walk, his bearing and his manner there was something ostentatious. Therefore, those who see only what is on the surface and, not knowing what is hidden within each man, judge mistakenly about others, made various evil suppositions about him. He made the acquaintance of a certain monk who lived in one of the monasteries of Constantinople, a holy man, and, revealing to him the innermost secrets of his heart, he also told him that he greatly desired to save his soul. The good father, after instructing him in a fitting way, gave him a small rule to follow and the little book of St. Mark the Ascetic where he writes on the spiritual law. The youth accepted the book with as much love and reverence as if it had been sent to him by God Himself, and he conceived a strong faith in it, hoping to gain from it

* Added to the Life here from St. Symeon's own words in Volume 5 of the Russian *Philokalia*, pp. 322-325.

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great benefit and much fruit. Therefore, he read it through with much zeal and attention and received great benefit from it all.

Of all the paragraphs in the book, three made a particularly deep impression on his heart. The first was: "If you seek healing, take care for your conscience (pay heed to it), and do what it tells you, and you will receive profit" (Paragraph 69). The second was: "He who seeks (hopes to receive) the activity of the Holy Spirit before practicing the commandments, is like a slave bought for money who, the moment he is bought, expects his freedom to be signed together with the payment of his purchase price" (Paragraph 64). The third was: "He who prays physically without having yet acquired a spiritual understanding, is like the blind man who cried out: *Son of David, have mercy on me* (Mark 10:48). But another man who had been blind, when his eyes were opened and he saw the Lord, no longer called Him Son of David, but confessed Him as the Son of God (John 9:35, 38)" (Paragraph 13,14).

These three paragraphs pleased him greatly, and he believed that, by paying heed to his conscience, as the first paragraph asserts, he would receive healing (of his infirmities of soul); that through fulfilling the commandments he would obtain the activity of the Holy Spirit, as the second paragraph teaches; and that, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, his mental eyes would be opened and he would see the ineffable beauty of the Lord, as the third paragraph promises.

And so he became wounded by love for this beauty, and though, as yet he did not see it, he conceived a strong longing for it and sought it fervently, in the hope of finding it in the end.

In spite of all this, he did nothing special (as he assured me with an oath), except that every evening without fail he practiced the small rule which the Elder had given him, and he never went to bed to sleep without performing it. But after some time

his conscience began to urge him: Make a few more prostrations, recite a few extra psalms, repeat "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me!" as many more times as you can. He willingly obeyed his conscience and did all it suggested without reflection, as though God Himself had commanded it; and he never lay down to sleep with his conscience reproaching him, saying: "Why did you not do this or that?" Thus he always listened to his conscience, never leaving undone whatever it suggested to him. And every day it added more and more to his usual rule, and in a few days his evening prayers grew into a long rule.

His days he spent in the palace of a certain Patricius, his work being to care for the needs of all the people living there. But every evening he went away, and no one knew what he did at home: he shed copious tears, made a great many bendings of the knee, prostrating himself with his face to the ground; when he stood at prayer he always kept his feet tightly pressed together and stood without moving; with pain of heart, with sighing and tears he recited prayers to the Most Holy Mother of God; and addressing himself to the Lord Christ, he fell at His immaculate feet as if He had been there in body, and implored Him to have mercy on him, as He once had on the blind man, and to open the eyes of his soul. Each evening his prayers grew longer so that at last he stood at prayer until midnight. Yet he never permitted himself when at prayer either slothfulness or negligence or loose postures, never let his eyes turn to the right or left or upwards to look at anything, but stood motionless, like a pillar or as though he were bodiless.

Once when he was thus standing at prayer and was saying, more in his mind than with his lips: "O God, have mercy on me a sinner,"—suddenly a most brilliant Divine radiance descended on him from above and filled all that place. Then this youth forgot that he was in a room or beneath a roof, for on all sides he saw nothing but light; he was not even aware whether

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there was any ground under his feet. He had no more care for anything worldly, and there came to his mind none of the thoughts which usually are in the minds of men clothed with flesh. He became wholly dissolved in this immaterial light, and it seemed to him that he himself became light. He forgot the whole world and was filled with tears and unspeakable joy. Then his mind rose upwards to the heavens, and there he saw another light, brighter than that light which surrounded him. And to his astonishment it seemed to him that on the edge of this light stood the holy and angelic Elder who had given him the small precept on prayer and the little book of St. Mark the Ascetic.

On hearing this from the youth, I thought that he had been greatly helped by the prayer of his Elder, and that God had granted him this vision to show the height of virtue on which this Elder stood. When the vision had passed and the youth came to himself, he found himself (as he said later) filled with joy and amazement, and he wept with his whole heart, which was filled with tears and great sweetness. Finally he went to bed, but immediately a cock began to crow, showing that it was already midnight. A little later he heard the church bells ringing for Matins; so the youth got up to read Matins, according to his custom. Thus he never slept that night; the thought of sleep never entered his mind.

How all this came to pass, the Lord knows, Who did it by ways known to Him. Yet this youth did nothing in particular, except always to fulfill faithfully the rule given him by the Elder, and to follow the instructions contained in the little book, with steadfast faith and undoubting hope. And let no one say that he did all this as a test. Such a thing never even entered his mind. He who makes tests does not possess firm faith. But this youth, putting aside every passionate and self-indulgent thought, took such care over the faithful fulfillment of what his conscience

suggested, that he no longer had any sympathy for the things of this world; even food and drink he did not eat for enjoyment or to satiety.

3. HIS DEEPENING RESOLVE TO LEAVE THE WORLD

After this it was natural that there should be manifest in Saint Symeon a powerful impulse to leave the world. But the Elder did not judge it good to satisfy this impulse immediately, and he convinced him to be patient yet longer.

Thus six years passed. It happened that he had to go away to his native place, and he went to the Elder to receive his blessing. Even though the Elder declared to him that now the time had come for him to enter monasticism, still he did not keep him from going to his native place. Saint Symeon gave his word that as soon as he should return he would leave the world. On the journey he took with him as guidance the *Ladder* of Saint John. Having come to his village, he was not drawn away by worldly matters, but continued the same kind of strict and solitary life, something for which the way of life in his household gave great opportunity. There was a church very near, and next to the church a little cell, not far from it a cemetery. In this little cell he shut himself up. He prayed, read and gave himself over to reflection on God.

At one time he was reading in the holy *Ladder* that insensitivity is the mortification of the soul and the death of the mind before the death of the body. And he became zealous always to banish from his soul this disease of insensitivity. For this aim he would go out at night to the cemetery and pray fervently, reflecting at the same time on death and the future judgment, and also on what now had become of the dead over whose tombs he was praying, the dead who had been alive just like

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him. To this he added a stricter fast and a vigil that was longer and more vigilant. Thus he kindled in himself the spirit of life according to God, and the burning of it kept him constantly in a condition of contrite feeling which did not allow any insensitivity. If it happened that a coolness came near, he would hasten to the cemetery, weep and lament, beating himself on the breast, and would not rise from the place until his usual contrite feeling returned. The fruit of this way of life was that the image of death and mortality became so deeply impressed in his consciousness that he did not look either upon himself or upon others except as upon dead men. Because of this no kind of beauty captivated him, and the usual movements of the flesh he mortified at their very appearance, being himself on fire with the fire of contrition. Lamentation became his food.

Finally came the time for him to return to Constantinople. His father asked him to remain home until his own departure for the other world; but seeing where the fiery desire of his son was directed, with love and a willing blessing he parted from him.

4. HIS ENTRANCE INTO MONASTICISM

The time of the return to Constantinople was for Saint Symeon the time of renunciation of the world and entrance into a monastery (at the age of 27). The Elder received him with a father's embrace and presented him to the abbot of his monastery of the Studion, Peter; but the latter gave him back into the hands of the Elder himself, this great Symeon the Reverent. Having received the young monk as a pledge of God, the Elder conducted him to a certain small cell, which was more like a tomb, and there he sketched out for him the order of the narrow and most grievous monastic life. He said to him: "Behold, my son, if you wish to be saved, go to church without fail, stand

there with reverent prayer without distraction, and do not have conversations with anyone; do not go from cell to cell, do not be presumptuous, preserve your mind from wandering, pay heed to yourself and reflect on your own sinfulness, on death and the judgment.”

In his severity, however, the Elder kept a reasonable measure, being concerned also lest his offspring have any attachment even to his strict labors. For this sometimes he assigned him difficult and belittling obediences, and sometimes easy and honorable ones. Sometimes he increased his fasting and vigil, and at other times he forced him to take food until he was full, and to sleep as much as needed; and by every means he trained him to renounce his own will and his own personal desires for himself.

Saint Symeon sincerely loved his Elder, revered him as a wise father, and not in a single thing did he step away from his will. He was so reverent before him that he would kiss the place on which the Elder had prayed; and so deeply did he humble himself before him that he did not consider himself worthy to approach and touch his garment.

5. HIS TRIALS AS A NOVICE

Such a kind of life does not occur without special temptations, and the enemy soon began to make them for him. He brought upon him a heaviness and weakness in his whole body, after which there followed a laziness and darkness of mind to such an extent that it seemed to him that he could not stand or open his mouth for prayer nor listen to the church service, nor even raise his mind on high. Understanding that this condition was not like the usual exhaustion from labors or like any kind of disease, the Saint armed himself against it by patience, forcing himself not to indulge himself in any way, but on the

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contrary to increase his efforts to do the opposite of what was being instilled in him, using this as a needful means for restoring his usual condition.

This battle, with God's help and the prayers of the Elder, was crowned with victory. God consoled him with the following vision: a certain cloud seemed to rise upwards from his feet and was dispersed in the air, and he felt himself wakeful, lively, and so light that it was as if he had no body. The temptation passed away, and the Saint in gratitude to the Redeemer resolved from this time never to sit down during Divine services, even when this is allowed by the typicon.

Then the enemy raised against him warfare of the flesh, disturbing him by thoughts, alarming him by movements of the flesh, and in his sleep presenting to him shameful imaginings. By God's grace and the prayers of the Elder this battle also was won.

Further, his relatives and even his parents rose up with the desire to persuade him to moderate his strictness or even to leave monasticism altogether. But this also not only did not lessen his usual struggles, but on the contrary increased them in certain respects, especially with relation to solitude, separation from everyone, and prayer.

Finally, the enemy armed against him the brethren of the monastery, his fellow strugglers, who did not like his life, even though they themselves were no friends of loose living. From the very beginning certain of the brethren were very well-disposed to him and praised him, but others were unapproving and treated him with reproaches and mockery, more often behind his back, but sometimes even right to his face. Saint Symeon paid no attention either to the praises or the reproaches, either to respect or disrespect, but strictly kept to the rules of life of inward and outward conduct which had been established with the counsel of his Elder. And the Elder often

renewed his exhortations to him to be firm and endure everything manfully, and especially to strive to so attune his soul that it might above all be meek, humble, simple, and without malice, because only in such souls is the grace of the Holy Spirit accustomed to dwell. Hearing such a promise, the Saint increased his zeal for life according to God.

Meanwhile, the dissatisfaction of the brethren increased more and more, the number of the dissatisfied increased, and even the abbot sometimes joined them. Seeing that the scandal was increasing, the Elder transferred his spiritual offspring to the renowned Anthony, abbot of the monastery of Saint Mamas (in Constantinople), limiting his own guidance to watching over him from a distance, and to frequent visits. Here also the life of Saint Symeon proceeded in the order which had now become usual for him. His advancement in ascetic life, not only outward but above all inward, became evident and gave hope that in the future also his zeal for this would not grow faint. Therefore the Elder decided finally to make him a full monk through the tonsure and by clothing him in the schema.

6. HE BECOMES A MONK AND AN INSTRUCTOR OF MONKS

This joyous event renewed and increased the ascetic virtues of the Saint. He gave himself entirely over to solitude, to reading, to prayer and thoughts of God. The whole week he would eat only vegetables and grains, and only on Sundays would he go to the table of the brethren. He slept little, and that on the floor, only laying a sheepskin over the rug. On Sundays and feast days he performed all-night vigils, standing at prayer from evening until morning, and for the whole day thereafter he would give himself no rest. Never did he utter an idle word, but he preserved always an extreme heedfulness and a sober

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self-concentration. He sat all closed up in his cell, and if he would go out to sit on a bench, it seemed as if he were drenched with tears and bore on his face the reflection of the flame of prayer. He read most of all the lives of saints, and after reading would sit down at his handicraft, which was calligraphy; he would copy something for the monastery and the elders or for himself. From the first sound of the semantron (announcing the morning service), he would stand up and hasten to church, where, with all prayerful heedfulness, he would listen to the order of Divine services. Whenever there was Liturgy, he would each time receive communion of the Holy Mysteries of Christ, and all that day he would remain in prayer and thoughts of God. He would usually keep vigil until midnight, and then, after sleeping a little, would go to church to pray together with the brethren. During Great Lent he spent the five week days without food; on Saturday and Sunday he would go to the table of the brethren and eat whatever was given to everyone. He did not lie down to sleep, but merely leaned over with his head on his arms and thus dozed off for an hour or so.

Thus he spent two years in this monastery which was new to him, growing in good temper and asceticism, and becoming wealthy in knowledge of the divine mysteries of salvation through the reading of the word of God and the writings of the Fathers, through his own thoughts of God, and through conversation with revered elders, especially with his own Symeon the Reverent and with Abbot Anthony.

These elders finally judged that the time had come for Saint Symeon to share with others the treasures of spiritual wisdom which he had acquired, and they placed on him the obedience of giving instructive talks in church for the edification of the brethren and all Christians. Even before this, from the very beginning of his ascetic life, together with the extracts from Patristic writings of everything which he considered was needed

for the saving of his soul, he occupied himself also with the writing down of his own ideas, which increased in him during the hours of reflection on God. But now this occupation became for him an obligation, with the difference that the edification was now to be addressed not only to himself but also to others. His speech was usually simple. Clearly beholding the great truths of our salvation, he set them forth in a way understandable to everyone, without in the least decreasing by simplicity of speech their height and depth. He was listened to with satisfaction by the elders themselves.

7. HE BECOMES A PRIEST AND ABBOT

After a little while, his constant guide, Symeon the Reverent, conceived the desire to consecrate him to the rank of priest by ordination. At about the same time, the abbot of the monastery died, and the brethren with a common voice chose in his place Saint Symeon. Thus at one and the same time he both received consecration as priest and was raised up to be abbot by the Patriarch at that time, Nicholas Chrysoberges.

Not without fear and tears did he accept these seeming promotions, which in actual fact were unbearable burdens. He judged concerning the ranks of priest and abbot not according to their outward appearance, but according to the essence of the matter. Therefore, he prepared himself to receive them with all heedfulness, reverence and devotion to God. For such a good outlook he was vouchsafed during the minutes of his ordination, as he later affirmed, a special mercy of God: a sensing of grace descending into the heart and the beholding of a certain spiritual, invisible light which overshadowed and penetrated him. This condition was repeated in him later every time that he served the Liturgy for all the 48 years of his priesthood, as may be guessed from his own words

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when he speaks seemingly of some other priest to whom this occurred.

Therefore, when he was asked what a priest is, and what priesthood is, with tears he would reply: "Alas, my brethren, why do you ask me about this? This is a matter of which it is fearful even to think. I bear the priesthood unworthily, but I know well what a priest should be. He should be pure both in body and all the more in soul, not stained by any kind of sin, humble in outward manner and contrite of heart in his inward disposition. When he serves the Liturgy he should behold God in his mind, while directing his eyes to the Gifts being offered. He should be consciously joined in his heart to Christ the Lord Who is there, so as to have the boldness of a son in conversing with God the Father, and to cry out without condemnation: *Our Father*." This is what our holy Father said to those who asked him about priesthood, and he implored them not to seek this mystery, which is high and fearful even for the angels themselves, before they come into a condition like that of the angels by means of many labors and struggles over themselves. "It is better," he said, "to exercise oneself every day with fervor in the doing of the commandments of God, every minute offering true repentance to God if one happens to sin in some way, not only by deed or word but even by the hidden thought of one's soul. And by this means one may daily offer to God both for oneself and for one's neighbors a sacrifice, a spirit which comes from contrite, tearful prayers and entreaties, this hidden sacred activity within us over which God rejoices. And receiving it upon His altar above the heavens, He grants to us the grace of the Holy Spirit." Thus he taught others, and in the same spirit he himself served the Liturgy.

And when he served the Liturgy, his face became like an angel's and was penetrated with such light that it was not possible to look freely at him by reason of the extraordinary

brightness coming from him, just as it is impossible to look freely at the sun. Concerning this there are the true testimonies of many of his disciples and others.

Having become abbot, the Saint's first act was the restoration of the monastery, because it was in need of repair in many parts. The church, which had been built by the Emperor Maurice, was in quite good condition; but after the restoration of the monastery he cleaned it also in some places and restored it in others, put down a marble floor, and adorned it with icons, church utensils, and everything needful. In the meantime he also improved the refectory and set as a rule that all should go to the refectory, not having special food by themselves. And so that this might be fulfilled the better, he himself went always to the common table, without, however, changing his usual rule of fasting.

The brethren began to increase, and he instructed them by word, example, and the common well-ordered rule of life, being zealous to make them all men of desires of God our Saviour. God increased in him also the gift of contrition and tears, which were for him food and drink. But he had for these tears three separate times: after Matins, during the Liturgy, and after Compline, at which times he would pray more fervently with abundant shedding of tears.

His mind was bright, clearly beholding the truths of God. He loved these truths with all the fullness of his heart. Therefore, when he would give a talk either privately or in church, his words went from heart to heart and were always effective and fruit-bearing.

He also wrote. Often the whole night he would sit composing theological reflections or a commentary on the Divine Scriptures, or instructions and talks which were edifying for everyone, or prayers in verse, or letters to various disciples, both laymen and monks. Lack of sleep did not disturb him, neither

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did hunger or thirst or the other needs of the body. All this was brought by long struggle into the most modest measure and became habit, as if it were a law of nature. However, despite such deprivations, in appearance he always seemed fresh, robust, and lively, just like those who eat and drink and sleep to satiety.

The fame of the Saint and his monastery went everywhere and gathered to him all zealots of the true life of renunciation of the world. He received everyone, instructed them and raised them up to perfection by his guidance. Many of them with all fervor undertook this work and successfully followed after their teacher. All of them presented as it were a choir of fleshless angels, constantly praising God and serving Him.

Having thus put his monastery in order, Saint Symeon conceived the intention of going into silence, appointing a special abbot for the brethren. He chose in his place a certain Arsenius, who had been tested many times by him, was well-rooted in good conduct, in good outlook of heart and in the ability to conduct monastery business. Transferring to him the burden of being abbot, in a general assembly of the brethren he gave him proper instruction on how to govern, and to the brethren he gave instruction on how to live under his rule. Having asked forgiveness of everyone, he went away into the cell which he had chosen for silence, in order to remain there without leaving, being alone with God in prayer, reflection on God, reading of the Scriptures, in sobriety and discernment of thoughts. To these struggles there was nothing for him to add. His struggles had always been in a state of concentration to the utmost extent; but, of course, the grace which guided him in everything knew what was most useful for him in this new way of life and suggested it to him. The gift of teaching, which had previously found satisfaction in instruction given both in private and in church, now turned all his attention and labor to

writing. He wrote at this time his more ascetic teachings in the form of short utterances, an example of which we have in the active and comtemplative chapters which have come down to us.

8. THE GREAT TRIAL OVER THE VENERATION OF HIS ELDER

However, the Saint was not fated to enjoy undisturbed peace to the end. A trial was sent to him, a mighty and alarming one, in order that he might burn utterly and be purified to the end in this fire. His Elder, Symeon the Reverent, his spiritual father and guide, departed to the Lord in great old age, after 45 years of strict ascetic life. Saint Symeon, knowing his ascetic labors, his purity of heart, his closeness to God and communion with Him, and the grace of the Holy Spirit which overshadowed him, composed in his honor some homilies, hymns, and canons of praise, and he brightly celebrated his memorial every year, having painted also an icon of him. Perhaps his example was imitated by others both within the monastery and outside, because he had many disciples and venerators among monks and laymen. Hearing about this, the Patriarch of that time, Sergius, summoned Saint Symeon and inquired about the feast and the cause of the feast. But having seen what an exalted life Symeon the Reverent had led, not only did he not oppose the celebration of his memory, but he himself began to take part in it, sending icon lamps and incense. Thus sixteen years passed. In memory of him who was the cause of the feast, men glorified God and were instructed by his exemplary life and virtues. But finally the enemy raised up because of this a storm of temptation.

A certain Stephen, Metropolitan of Nicomedia, who was very learned and eloquent in word, left his diocese and lived in

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Constantinople, having access to the Patriarch and the court. Being a man of this world, when he heard that everywhere people were praising the wisdom and sanctity of Saint Symeon, and especially of his marvelous writings composed for the instruction of those seeking salvation, he rose up in envy against him. Leafing through his writings, he found them not very learned and not eloquent; therefore, he had an attitude of disdain towards them, and discouraged from reading them those who liked to do so. From criticism of his writings, he desired to go over to criticism of the Saint himself, but he could not find anything for reproach in his life until, in his evil intent, he came upon his custom of celebrating the memory of Symeon the Reverent. This custom seemed to him to be against church order and something scandalous. Certain of the parish priests and laymen agreed with him in this, and they all began to drone in the ears of the Patriarch and the bishops who were around him, inspiring a lawless intrigue against the righteous one. But the Patriarch and the bishops, knowing the works of the Saint and knowing from whence and why this agitation was coming, paid no attention to it. However, having begun his evil deed, Stephen was not appeased, and he continued to spread dissatisfaction in the city with regard to the Saint on this account, not forgetting to remind the Patriarch of this also, so as to incline him to think the same.

Thus for about two years a war was waged between the righteousness of the Saint and the lie of Stephen. The latter was always seeking out whether there might not be something in the life of the respected Elder that might cause some doubt as to his sanctity. And he found that Symeon the Reverent sometimes said, in his feelings of humility, "I also have temptations and falls." These words he accepted in the crudest sense, and he went to the Patriarch with them as with emblems of victory, saying, "This is the kind of man he was and this Symeon

respects him as a saint and has even painted an icon of him and bows down to it." They called the Saint and demanded of him an explanation with regard to the accusation brought against his Elder. He replied: "As regards my celebration of the memory of my father who gave birth to me in the life according to God, Your Holiness, my Master, knows this better than I. As for the accusation, let the most wise Stephen prove something more convincing than what he says. And when he shall prove it, then I will enter into defense of my revered Elder. I myself cannot help but revere my Elder, following the commandments of the Apostles and the Holy Fathers; but I do not try to persuade anyone else to do this. This is a matter of my conscience, and others may do as they please." With this explanation they were satisfied, but they gave a commandment to the Saint in the future to celebrate the memory of his Elder as humbly as possible, without any kind of solemnity.

And thus the matter would have ended if it were not for this Stephen. He was given no repose by the failure of his attacks, and for six more years he continued to try and invent something and attract the Saint to reply to him and to explain himself. Meanwhile, he attained in some way from the cell of the Saint an icon where Symeon the Reverent was depicted in a choir of other saints being overshadowed by Christ the Lord, Who was blessing them. And he managed to persuade the Patriarch and his Synod in the interests of peace to agree to blot out the inscription over his face which said "Saint." In this regard Stephen raised throughout the city a whole persecution against the icon of Symeon the Reverent, and zealots like himself acted in regard to it exactly as in the times of the iconoclasts.

This agitation took on a more and more disorderly character, and there was no end to the pestering of the Patriarch and the bishops with regard to it. Seeking out means of bringing about peace, they decided that for the pacifying of minds and

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the satisfaction of Stephen, it might be sufficient to send Saint Symeon away from Constantinople. Not seeing how he celebrated the memory of his Elder, others also would begin to forget about it, and finally it would be forgotten altogether. Having decided this, they ordered the Saint to find himself another place of silence outside of Constantinople. He agreed to this with joy, loving the silence which was so often and with such agitation violated in the city.

9. HIS LAST YEARS IN RETIREMENT

Somewhere near Constantinople the Saint came to love a certain locality where there was the ancient church of Saint Marina, and he settled there. The owner of this place, one of the powerful archons, Christopher Phagoura, a disciple and venerator of Symeon, greatly rejoiced when he heard of his choice. Therefore he himself hastened there and gave total repose to his spiritual father, both by the place he provided him and by furnishing everything needful to him. Even more, at the advice of the Saint he dedicated to God this whole place and entrusted it to the Saint for the building of a monastery.

Meanwhile, in Constantinople the venerators of the Saint, finding out about his departure, were in perplexity as to why this had happened. The Saint wrote them, telling them how everything had happened, and begged them not to become disturbed over him, assuring them that everything was for the best and that it was much more peaceful for him in his new place. His venerators, however, among whom there were quite a few eminent persons, did not wish to leave him without their intercession. Therefore, coming to the Patriarch, they asked for an explanation, wondering whether there were not something hostile and unjust with regard to their spiritual father in this matter. In order to calm them the Patriarch assured them that

he also respected the Saint and venerated his Elder, and that he himself approved the celebration of his memory, with the single reservation that this should be done not so triumphantly. As for his being sent away, this was acknowledged as profitable as a means of stopping the agitation which had been raised in the city against this celebration. So that there might not remain any doubt with regard to this among the eminent persons, he invited them to come to him another time together with Saint Symeon, and in his presence he repeated the same thing. The Saint confirmed the words of the Patriarch, assuring them that he had nothing against anyone, and all the less against His Holiness, whose attention he had always enjoyed; and right here he asked his blessing for the establishment of the monastery he already intended to establish. These explanations pacified all who were disturbed by the sending away of the Saint. After this the Saint also wrote a peaceful letter to Metropolitan Stephen, and the common peace was restored.

Upon leaving the Patriarch, the Saint and his friends were invited to visit the above-mentioned Christopher Phagoura, and at his home they all made a collection among themselves of the sum needed for building the monastery. After this the building itself was quickly begun, and although it was not without obstacles, it was quickly finished. Gathering a new brotherhood and establishing in it the order of monastic life, Saint Symeon again went away from everything and sat in silence with his usual struggles and labors, devoting all his time, apart from chance conversations with those who were in need of counsel, to writing instructive homilies, ascetic instructions, and prayerful hymns.

From this time on his life proceeded peacefully until his very death. He matured into a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13), and manifested himself as richly adorned with gifts of grace. He uttered proph-

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ecies concerning certain persons which were fulfilled in reality. By his prayers there were many healings, which he performed by commanding that the sick be anointed with oil from the lamp which burned before the icon of Saint Marina.

For thirteen years the Saint remained in his new monastery, and then the end of his life on earth drew near (in 1022). Feeling the nearness of his departure, he called his disciples, gave them necessary instruction, and, after receiving communion of the Holy Mysteries of Christ, commanded them to sing the prayers for the departure of the soul, during which, while praying, he departed saying, "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commit my soul."

Thirty years after this, his relics were uncovered (in 1050), and they were filled with heavenly fragrance and glorified by miracles. The memory of Saint Symeon the New Theologian is celebrated on March 12th, the day of his repose.

His divinely wise writings were preserved and brought into general circulation by his disciple, Nicetas Stethatos, to whom the Saint himself had entrusted them. This Nicetas, during the lifetime of the Saint, copied out his writings in good form as they were composed, and later gathered them together into one collection.

10. THE WRITINGS OF SAINT SYMEON*

The chief subject of St. Symeon's writings is the hidden activity in Christ (spiritual life). He explains the path of the inward warfare, instructs in the most spiritual means for purification, exhorts to struggle primarily against the spiritual passions, against sinful impulses and movements. The beginning

* This chapter is taken in its entirety from Archbishop Philaret of Chernigov, *Historical Teaching of the Fathers of the Church*, vol. 3, St. Petersburg, 1882, pp. 306-308.

THE LIFE OF ST. SYMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN

of our fall, he says, is performed in the soul out of pride, which is why we must humble the soul. Certain of his contemporaries, trusting too much to outward virtues, being passionately attached to the Studite rule but not to its spirit, rose up against the Saint as a violator of the way of salvation which they knew so well. From the works of St. Symeon it is clearly evident that he had no idea of rejecting outward struggles; but, while teaching his disciples to observe them, he demanded a battle against the sin-loving soul. He himself went on the path of inward sorrows, with the aid of grace, and he demanded the same of others. Let us look at his reply to his contemporary questioners, and it will give a sufficient indication of the subjects of his instruction.

"People believe and convince themselves that it cannot be that a man should be completely pure of lusts and vices so as to receive the Comforter in himself essentially. Such ones speak and act against their own salvation; they close for themselves the doors of the Kingdom of Heaven and forbid others, who might wish to do so, to enter. If they hear about anyone that he has lawfully struggled and is pure of disturbing passions, that he preaches before everyone the wonders of God which God has worked in him according to His unlying promise ... they say: 'Stop, you are deceived and proud! Who is such as the Fathers were? Who has seen or can see God? Who has received the Spirit in such abundance that he has been vouchsafed through Him to see the Father and the Son?' Yes, it is none of you, precisely so, as you yourselves say. But from among those who have resolved to bear the cross, to go on the narrow path, who are ready to lose their soul for the sake of eternal life—very many of such ones have seen God, and very many, as I think, see Him now, and everyone who only wishes to do so will see Him."

"They say: 'He is deceived; for he that says he has no sin is blind and does not see.' This is true; but he who has God cannot

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sin, for His seed remains in him, as John the most intelligent, the thunder of the Apostles, has said."

These words in themselves indicate that the states of which St. Symeon speaks are ones for which great preparatory struggles are required. In order to see this in the writings of St. Symeon, it is sufficient to read his instruction concerning the third form of prayer, and in particular the place where he speaks of the preparatory states and understanding of the struggler. One may cite also some other words of his: "Before lamentation and tears let us not be deceived by empty words, and let us not delude ourselves as to our advancement in piety.... Without tears the hardness of our heart will not be softened, the soul will not acquire humility of spirit, we will not be able to make ourselves humble; and whoever has not put himself in order in this way cannot be united with the Holy Spirit."

Concerning these preparatory states he speaks in such detail and offers numerous wise means, warnings, and exhortations that could be uttered only by a person who has studied the moral life in experience, and not for just a year but for decades. His works are a most abundant treasury of thoughts on spiritual life, thoughts which act with power on the soul that thirsts for piety.

St. Symeon is called the New Theologian because he taught such profound mysteries of the inner life of struggle as had been long forgotten.

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THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS CHRIST:
THE MEANS OF OUR REDEMPTION

Icon painted by Theophanes the Cretan in the year 1547.
Dionysiou Monastery, Mount Athos.

HOMILY 1

The Transgression of Adam and Our Redemption by Jesus Christ

1. IN WHAT CONSISTED THE TRANSGRESSION OF ADAM?

THE FIRST-CREATED ADAM, being in Paradise, fell, at the instigation of the serpent, into pride; and having dreamed of being a god, as the devil told him, he tasted of the tree from which God had commanded him not to eat. For this he was given over to great chastisements—to corruption and death, for the humbling of his pride. But when God condemns for something, he gives also a sentence, and His sentence becomes deed and an eternal chastisement, and there is no longer any possibility of annihilating this chastisement which has come from the decree of God.

But think now: Adam sinned with a great sin because he did not believe the words of God, but believed the words of the serpent. Compare God and the serpent, and you will see how great was the sin of most-wise Adam. In his great wisdom he had given names to all the animals (Gen. 2:19-20). But when

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with his whole soul he believed the serpent and not God, then the Divine grace which had rested on him stepped away from him, so that he became the enemy of God by reason of the unbelief which he had shown to His words. Adam thought that God envied him and did not wish that he also should know good and evil; and he thought that God had commanded him not to taste of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in order that he might not become a god like unto God Who had created him. And he tasted, and immediately he knew his nakedness, and instead of becoming a god he became corruptible, and as corruptible, mortal.

2. HOW BY REASON OF HIS TRANSGRESSION DID ALL MEN BECOME CORRUPTIBLE AND MORTAL?

And behold, as you see, the sentence of God remains forever as an eternal chastisement. And all of us men became both corruptible and mortal, and there is nothing that might set aside this great and frightful sentence. And when there is no possibility to set aside this sentence, then what benefit is there in wisdom or in wealth, or in power, or in the whole world? For this reason the Almighty Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, came so as to humble Himself in place of Adam. And truly He humbled Himself, even to the death of the Cross. The word of the Cross, as the Scripture says, is this: *Cursed is everyone that hangeth upon a tree* (Gal. 3:13).

Adam, without having any need for this, took from the fruit of that tree (from which God had commanded him not to taste, threatening him that if he should only taste of it he should die); he tasted and died. One should know that since a man has a body and a soul, therefore he has two deaths also: one, the death of the soul, and the other, the death of the body. Likewise, there

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are also two immortalities, one of the soul and one of the body, even though both of them are in one man, for the soul and the body are one man.

Thus, in soul Adam died immediately, as soon as he had tasted; and later, after nine hundred and thirty years, he died also in body. For, as the death of the body is the separation from it of the soul, so the death of the soul is the separation from it of the Holy Spirit, by Whom God Who had created him had been pleased that man be overshadowed, so that he might live like the angels of God, who, being always enlightened by the Holy Spirit, remain immovable towards evil. Later, for this reason, the whole human race also became such as our forefather Adam became through the fall—mortal, that is, both in soul and body. Man such as God had created him no longer existed in the world. And there was no possibility that anyone should become such as Adam was before the transgression of the commandment. But it was necessary that there should be such a man.

3. HOW DID THE MERCIFUL AND MAN- LOVING GOD, THROUGH THE DISPENSATION OF THE INCARNATION, DELIVER THE HUMAN RACE FROM CORRUPTION AND DEATH?

And thus God, desiring to have such a man as He had created Adam in the beginning, sent in the latter times to the earth His Only-begotten Son, and He came and was Incarnate, accepting a perfect humanity, so as to be perfect God and perfect man, and thus the Divinity had a man worthy of It.

And behold the Man! Such a One there has never been, there is not, and there shall never be. But why did Christ become such a one? In order to keep the law of God and His commandments, and so as to enter into battle with and conquer

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the devil. Both the one and the other occurred in Him by themselves; for if Christ is that very God Who gave the commandments and the law, then how could He not keep that law and those commandments which He Himself had given? And if He is God, as He is in truth, then how is it possible for Him to be deceived or deluded by any trickery of the devil? The devil, to be sure, being blind and senseless, rose up against Him with warfare. But this was allowed so that there might be performed a certain great and fearful mystery, namely, so that Christ, the Sinless One, should suffer, and through this Adam, who had sinned, might receive forgiveness. For this also, in place of the tree of knowledge, there was the Cross; in place of the stepping of the feet by which our first ancestors walked to the forbidden tree, and in place of their stretching out of their hands in order to take of the fruit of the tree, there were nailed to the Cross the innocent feet and hands of Christ; in place of the tasting of the fruit, there was the tasting of gall and vinegar, and in place of the death of Adam, the death of Christ.

And then what happened? Christ lay in the grave three days, for the sake of the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, so as to show that even though He alone, the Son, became Incarnate and suffered, still the dispensation is the work of the All-Holy Trinity.

And in what does this dispensation consist? One Person of the Holy Trinity, namely the Son and Word of God, having become Incarnate, offered Himself in the flesh as a sacrifice to the Divinity of the Father, and of the Son Himself, and of the Holy Spirit, in order that the first transgression of Adam might be benevolently forgiven for the sake of this great and fearful work, that is, for the sake of this sacrifice of Christ, and in order that by its power there might be performed another new birth and re-creation of man in Holy Baptism, in which we also are cleansed by water mingled with the Holy Spirit. From that time

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people are baptized in water, are immersed in it and taken out from it three times, in the image of the three-day burial of the Lord, and after they die in it to this whole evil world, in the third bringing out from it they are already alive, as if resurrected from the dead, that is, their souls are brought to life and again receive the grace of the Holy Spirit as Adam had it before the transgression. Then they are anointed with Holy Myrrh, and by means of it are anointed with Jesus Christ, and are fragrant in a way above nature. Having become in this way worthy of being associates of God, they taste His Flesh and drink His Blood, and by means of the sanctified bread and wine become of one Body and Blood with God Who was Incarnate and offered Himself as a sacrifice.

After this it is no longer possible that sin should reign and tyrannize over them, for they are gods by grace. Since Adam had fallen under the curse, and through him all people also who proceed from him, therefore the sentence of God concerning this could in no way be annihilated; and therefore Christ was for us a curse, through being hung upon the tree of the Cross, so as to offer Himself as a sacrifice to His Father, as has been said, and to annihilate the sentence of God by the superabundant worth of the sacrifice. For what is greater and higher than God? Just as in this whole visible creation there is nothing higher than man (for everything visible was created for man), so also God is incomparably higher than everything created, and nothing can enter into comparison with Him, not the whole visible and invisible creation.

Thus God, Who is incomparably higher than the whole visible and invisible creation, accepted human nature, which is higher than the whole visible creation, and offered it as a sacrifice to His God and Father. Being shamed by such a sacrifice (I speak thus), and honoring it, the Father could not leave it in the hands of death. Therefore He annihilated His

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sentence and resurrected from the dead first of all and at the beginning Him Who had given Himself as a sacrifice for the redemption and as a replacement for men who are of the same race as Himself; and afterwards, in the last day of the end of this world, He will resurrect also all men. Moreover, the souls of those who believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in this great and fearful sacrifice, God resurrects in the present life; and a sign of this resurrection is the grace of the Holy Spirit which He gives to the soul of every Christian, as if giving a new soul. Such a soul of a Christian is called “trustworthy” (or “faithful”), because to it is entrusted the Holy Spirit of God and it has accepted Him—the Spirit of God Who is life eternal, since the Holy Spirit is eternal God Who proceeds from the eternal God and Father.

4. AND IN WHAT CONSISTS THE MYSTERY AND THE THREE-DAY BURIAL OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST?

Inasmuch, therefore, as the Cross has become as it were the altar of this fearful sacrifice—for on the Cross the Son of God died for the fall of man—therefore the Cross is justly revered and worshipped and depicted as the sign of the common resurrection of all men, so that those who bow down before the wood of the Cross might be delivered from the curse of Adam and receive the blessing and grace of God for the doing of every virtue. For Christians the Cross is magnification, glory, and power: for all our power is in the power of Christ Who was crucified; all our sinfulness is mortified by the death of Christ on the Cross; and all our exaltation and all our glory are in the humility of God, Who humbled Himself to such an extent that He was pleased to die even between evil-doers and thieves. For this very reason Christians who believe in Christ sign them-

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selves with the sign of the Cross not simply, not just as it happens, not carelessly, but with all heedfulness, with fear and with trembling and with extreme reverence. For the image of the Cross shows the reconciliation and friendship into which man has entered with God.

Therefore the demons also fear the image of the Cross, and they do not endure to see the sign of the Cross depicted even in the air, but they flee from this immediately knowing that the Cross is the sign of the friendship of men with God, and that they, as apostates and enemies of God, being far from His Divine face, do not have any longer freedom to draw near to those who have become reconciled with God and united with Him, and they can no longer tempt them. And if it seems that they tempt certain Christians, let everyone know that they battle against those who have not properly understood the exalted mystery of the Cross.

But those who have understood this mystery and in very fact have known in experience the authority and power which the Cross has over demons, have likewise understood that the Cross gives the soul strength, power, meaning, and divine wisdom. These with great joy cry out: *Far be it from me to glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world is crucified to me and I unto the world* (Gal. 6:14). And thus, inasmuch as the sign of the Cross is great and fearful, every Christian has the duty to make it with fear and trembling, with reverence and heedfulness, and not simply, and not as it happens, simply out of habit and carelessly: for according to the degree of the reverence which one has towards the Cross, he receives corresponding power and help from God. To Him may there be glory and dominion forever. Amen.



THE CREATION OF EVE BY GOD THE WORD
Fresco from the Church of the Resurrection,
Sucevitsa Monastery, Romania

HOMILY 2

The Blessed State

1. THAT HUMAN NATURE THROUGH THE INCARNATION OF THE SON, GOD THE WORD, COMES AGAIN INTO THE BLESSED STATE, THAT IS, INTO THE GOOD AND DIVINE CONDITION IN WHICH IT WAS UNTIL THE TRANSGRESSION OF ADAM.

INASMUCH AS human nature lost its blessed state through the transgression of Adam, it is essential for us to know what Adam was before the loss of the blessed state, and in what consisted this blessed state, or that good and divine condition which man had before the transgression. The Holy Fathers tell us that God became man in order that through His becoming man He might again raise up human nature into the blessed state. Therefore, we must know in what way it is that man, through the Economy of Christ's Incarnation, may again come into the blessed state.

God, in the beginning when He created man, created him holy, passionless, and sinless, in His own image and likeness. And man was then precisely like God Who created him; for the holy, sinless and passionless God creates also His creatures holy, passionless and sinless. But inasmuch as unalterability and

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unchangingness are characteristic of the Unoriginate and Uncreated Divinity alone, therefore the created man naturally was alterable and changeable, although he had the means and the possibility, with the help of God, not to be subject to alteration and change.

Thus man was holy, and as holy he had no need of any law; for the righteous need no law. What need is there of the law for one who is holy, passionless and pure? The law commands to do good and not to do evil. But the Scripture says that *God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good* (Gen. 1:31). And so, inasmuch as everything was good, what need was there for man to learn what was good and what was bad? Since there was nothing except what was very good, this divine man had no need of the law.

2. LIKEWISE OF THE NATURAL LAW, WRITTEN AND SPIRITUAL.

However, inasmuch as it was in his power to eat of every tree of Paradise and from the very Tree of Life itself, there was given to him a commandment not to eat from one tree only, so that he might know that he was alterable and changeable, and might beware, and might always remain in that good and divine condition. God, by those words which He said to him in giving the commandment that if he should eat he would die, gave him to understand that he was alterable and changeable.

Thus, at that time, in Paradise, no law was necessary, either written or spiritual. But after man had eaten of that forbidden tree and had died a bitter death, that is, had fallen away from God and become subject to corruption—then, so that he might not fall completely away from every good (since evil had spread mightily among the human race and was tyrannizing over it by force, by reason of the disastrous enfeeblement to which it had

become subject as a result of corruption) there was given him a law in order that it might indicate what was good and what bad. For man had become blind; he had gone out of his mind and become senseless; and therefore he also had need of instruction, as is written in the Psalms, *Unveil mine eyes, and I shall perceive wondrous things out of Thy law* (Ps. 118:73). Do you see to what a pitiful condition man had come, and how, therefore, he had need of the written law? For after he had fallen he could no longer know even this world, unless he be enlightened from above by God with knowledge of it.

Afterwards, however, when Christ came and so intimately joined in himself the Divinity with humanity that these two which had been extremely separated, that is, the Divinity and humanity, became one Person, although they remained unfused and unmingled—from that time man became, as it were, a light, through the union with that first and unsetting Light of God, and he has no more need of any written law, because the divine grace of Jesus Christ remaining with him and in him brings forth as fruit for him the blessed state, that is, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, goodness, mercifulness, faith, meekness, and temperance. This is why the Apostle Paul, in enumerating such fruits of the Holy Spirit says at the end, *against such there is no law* (Gal. 5:22-23); because for the righteous no law is needed. And he who does not yet have such fruits of the Holy Spirit is not of Christ, as the Apostle says; *if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His* (Rom. 8:9). Such a one must struggle and strive so as to become of Christ, lest he believe in Christ in vain, in which case Christ is of no benefit to him whatever. All his striving and all his struggle must be directed to acquiring the Spirit of Christ, and in this way to bring forth the fruits of the Holy Spirit: for in this consists the spiritual law and the blessed state.

3. YET MORE CONCERNING THE WAY IN WHICH ONE MAY COME INTO THE BLESSED STATE.

But if human nature, through the Incarnation of Christ, comes again into the blessed state, as it was in the beginning, and if there is no other means and no other power or wisdom, or labor and struggle whereby human nature might again come into the blessed state and become as it was created in the beginning, but it is solely in the hand of God Who gave it its existence; and if there is no other means whatsoever to give him the blessed state,—then what need is there vainly to labor, struggling for this by one's own ascetic exploits alone, by readings, sufferings of evil, exhausting oneself with thirst, hunger and vigils? And if such and so great sufferings of evil are in vain and profitless for one who does not know this great mystery (of salvation), then upon every Christian lies the duty of learning it and knowing it, so as not to labor in vain in those sufferings of evil, and not to allow his soul to perish even with them—something more disastrous than any other disaster. For all such and so great sufferings of evil should be undertaken not so as to *come* into the blessed state, but in order to preserve the blessed state which we have received before through Holy Baptism, since this treasure is difficult to preserve and we must pay good heed that we preserve it, as the Holy Fathers have said. And in the future life a Christian will not be tested as to whether he renounced the world, whether he fasted, whether he performed vigils, whether he prayed, whether he wept, or performed any other such good deeds in the present life; but he will be carefully tested as to whether he has some kind of likeness to Christ, as a son to his father, as the Apostle Paul also says: *My little children, over whom I am again in travail until Christ be*

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formed in you (Gal. 4:19). *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ* (Gal. 3:27).

4. WHAT KIND OF DEEDS WE MAY DO IN ORDER TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

Those who keep the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven, if they do not see in a Christian the likeness of Christ, as a son to his father, will by no means open them to him and allow him to enter. For just as those who are like the old Adam, who transgressed the commandment of God, remain outside the Kingdom of Heaven, despite the fact that they are not by any means guilty of the fact that they are like their forefather Adam, so also Christians, like the New Adam, their father Christ, enter into the Kingdom of Heaven despite the fact that their likeness to Christ is not their own doing, since this is accomplished by means of the faith which they receive in Christ.

The likeness of Christ consists in truth, meekness, righteousness, and together with them humility and love of mankind. The truth is beheld in all one's words, and meekness in all words spoken by others to oneself; because one who is meek, whether he is surrounded by praises or reproaches, preserves himself passionless and is neither exalted by praises nor embittered by reproaches. Righteousness is beheld in all deeds; for just as we define the weight of things by means of scales, and just as we find out the quality of gold through polishing it against a stone, so also we do not depart in any undertaking from the boundaries of righteousness if in it we keep in mind those measures (means of measurement or scales) which our Lord has given to us—the commandments.

Humility is as it were a treasure that cannot be stolen, which is formed in the mind that bears the conviction that only by the



THE CREATION OF EVE
and the blessing of her and Adam by God the Word.
19th-century icon from the Troyan Monastery, Bulgaria.

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power of grace received from Christ are there any good qualities to be shown in oneself—that is, truth, meekness, and righteousness. Love of mankind is a likeness of God, since it does good to all men, both the pious and impious, both good and evil, both those known and those unknown, just as God also does good to all, shines the sun upon the righteous and the unrighteous, and sends rain upon the evil and upon the good.

And so, those who have received this from Christ have from Him a likeness to Him, as a son has from a father the likeness to the father, because there is no son who is not of the nature of his father. It is for this that God became man, and through this union of the Divinity with human nature the Divinity reigns over human nature, as has been written: *Bend thy bow, and proceed prosperously, and be king, because of truth and meekness and righteousness* (Ps. 44:5).

Thus, one over whom Christ has not come to be king, through those virtues of which we have spoken, is not like Christ as to a father, and is unworthy to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. In truth so it is. Therefore, all other struggles are in vain if they are not for the sake (of these virtues). Let us also, brethren, strive to become like to Christ by means of these virtues, that we may be vouchsafed His Kingdom. To Him may there be glory and dominion unto the ages. Amen.



THE CREATION OF ADAM AND EVE (left),
and their instruction concerning the future mystery of Redemption
(right), visible in the Cross and in the instruments of the Passion of
Christ, which the angel is showing to them.

HOMILY 10

Adam's Sin and Our Salvation

1. GOD IN THE BEGINNING DID NOT
CREATE MAN INFIRM, SO THAT HE WOULD
SIN OUT OF INFIRMITY AS HE NOW SINS.

IN CONSIDERING the sin by which Adam sinned when he was in the glory and enjoyment of Paradise, no one will find that it was done out of necessity or infirmity, or for any good reason at all, but solely out of disdain for the commandment of God, out of the ingratitude and apostasy which Adam showed with relation to God his Creator. Besides, there was given him by God an opportunity for repentance, that he might obtain forgiveness; and this was for the two following reasons: first, because he had not of himself devised the evil, but he was deceived and led into error by the counsel of the devil; secondly, because he was clothed with flesh, for Adam as a creature was subject to change, but could not fall into complete apostasy from God, as did the devil and the demons who followed him, who did not have flesh.

Therefore, a great hope for obtaining mercy is left to man now, when he is clothed with that certain natural infirmity

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which human nature assumed after the fall, and by reason of which he sins. Still, this cannot justify his sins, but should only inspire him to hasten to God the sooner with a feeling of gratitude to Him for giving him the opportunity for repentance, and to ask of Him forgiveness and strength—forgiveness of his sins, because even though he sinned out of human infirmity, he should have withstood even unto death; and strength, so as to receive from God power, by the grace of Christ, not to sin, but to do only good deeds which are pleasing to God.

2. ONE THING IS THE SIN OF ADAM, AND ANOTHER THE OTHER SINS BY WHICH WE SIN NOW.

None of us has ever sinned nor can ever sin as Adam sinned, because there is not and never has been anyone equal to him in everything—anyone, that is, like him in not being subject to misfortunes, without care, free from every natural need. For, behold, what a chastisement was ordained for Adam and his descendants for transgressing the commandment in Paradise—thirst, hunger, cold in winter, heat in summer, and from these the need for food, drink, clothing and shelter, for which are necessary labor, troubling oneself, and sweat for one's whole life. And what follows further? Impatience by reason of all the above-indicated needs, and opposition to the decree of God. For every man who is born in the present life, not knowing that all such temporal chastisements have been laid upon the whole human race for the transgression of our forefather Adam, receives them not with thanksgiving, but brazenly murmurs because of them; and desiring to find repose from his needs he envies, strives to acquire more than is needful, takes what belongs to another, is unjust.

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And so it is these that are our sins, that is, that we do not patiently bear the temporal chastisements of God and do not give thanks for them but becoming presumptuous as if we were enemies of God we go in a certain sense against that Divine decree that states *in the sweat of thy face thou shall eat thy bread* (Gen. 3:19), and we exert all our strength so as to find repose and we do not find it because there is no opportunity for us to escape from labors and sweats, and from this being yoked to needs, no matter what we might do.

Therefore, fortunate is he who endures all these temporal chastisements with gratitude, confessing that he has been justly condemned to them for the ancestral sin. Yea, he will find repose from his labors; for by reason of these chastisements the All-good God has given death to men, so that those who bear them with gratitude might rest from them for a time, and then might be resurrected and glorified in the day of judgment through the new Adam, the sinless Jesus Christ and God *Who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification* (Rom. 4:25).

3. WHAT HAS BEEN GIVEN YOU FROM CHRIST, AND WHAT IS SIN.

God, who came into the world and became man, offered to men the following two great goods: He united the Divine nature with human nature so that man might become a god, and in this man, who has become a god by grace, the Most Holy Trinity has mystically come to dwell. And how after this can one who has been vouchsafed such great gifts sin, as John the Theologian and Evangelist says: *Whosoever is born of God doeth no sin, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God* (I John 3:9).

And what is sin? Evil thoughts, words, and deeds. And so one who truly has been vouchsafed the good things of God's

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becoming man cannot allow any such things into himself. He can never allow them, and if he allows them even a little bit once, he ceases already to be what he is. He who thinks sometimes good things and sometimes bad, he whose speech is sometimes good and sometimes bad, he who sometimes does good deeds and sometimes evil—is like a man who sometimes goes to the temple of God and sometimes to the temple of idols, sometimes worships God and sometimes the demons. Can someone in whom God has come to dwell be such a one?

Therefore a Christian must always think and speak and do only what is good, for as the Lord says, *A house divided against itself shall not stand* (Matt. 12:25). But one must always keep in mind also that it is impossible for thoughts always to be good (and from such thoughts are usually produced words and deeds which are similar to them), unless first Christ the Lord has come to dwell in the mind, for which we should struggle as far as we have strength—that is, so that Christ the Lord should come to dwell in our mind.

4. GOD BECAME MAN IN ORDER TO DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL.

John the Theologian says, *To this end was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil* (I John 3:8). The works of the devil are every kind of sin: envy, lying, cunning, hatred, hostility, remembrance of wrongs, slander, anger, rage, pride, vainglory, lack of mercy, covetousness, thievery, unrighteousness, evil lust, quarrelsomeness, dissatisfaction, irritability, ridicule, making oaths, forgetfulness of God, lack of human mercy, and every other evil. And so for those who are called Christians and do such works of the devil, what benefit is there from the fact that they are called Christians, when the

manifestation of the Son of God has not destroyed in them these works of the devil?

If anyone will say that some of those who are like this explain the Divine Scripture, theologize, preach Orthodox dogmas—let them know that it is not in this that the work of Christ consists. John the Theologian does not say, *to this end was the Son of God manifested*, that certain ones should theologize and orthodoxize (that is, pride themselves on their Orthodoxy—*tr. note*), but *that He might destroy the works of the devil*. Concerning such ones, I shall say that first one must clean the vessel of every filth and then place in it the myrrh, lest the myrrh itself become defiled, and in place of fragrance there should come from it an evil smell. The Son of God, the Word, did not become man in order only that men should believe in the Holy Trinity, glorify It, and theologize about It, but in order to destroy the works of the devil. In whomever among those who have received the faith of Christ the works of the devil shall be destroyed, to him may be entrusted the mysteries of theology and Orthodox dogmas. But those in whom such works have not been destroyed and who turn out to be tangled up in them for the dishonor and blasphemy of God, in essence such ones stand in the same rank with the pagans to whom it is forbidden and prohibited even to enter into the temple of the Lord and to pray to God there, and not merely to read the Divine Scripture and explain it, as has been written, *But unto the sinner God hath said: Why declarest thou My statutes and takest up My covenant in thy mouth? Thou hast hated chastisement and hast cast out My words behind thee* (Ps. 49:16-17). He who does not take to his heart the laws of God hates the chastisement and correction which are inspired by the words of the Lord and stops up his ears lest he hear the Word of God which declares concerning the future judgment and the recompense to sinners, or concerning the unquenchable fire of gehenna and the other torments of hell, or

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concerning the eternal judgment from which no one can escape once he has been subjected to it. He who does not strive with all his strength to have the commandments of God ever before his eyes and to keep them, but rather disdains them and prefers what is contrary to them and brings this into act—such a one casts the words of God behind him.

I shall explain this by the following example. When God clearly commands, *Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand* (Matt. 4:17), and again, *Strive to enter in by the narrow door* (Luke 13:24), and he who hears this does not only not wish to repent and to force himself to go through the narrow door, but spends all the days of his life in great carelessness, adding to his previous sins every hour new ones, and gives repose and comfort to his body above what is needful and even more than is decent, which serves as a sign of the broad and spacious path which leads to perdition and not the narrow and most sorrowful path which leads to eternal life—then is it not evident that such a one casts behind him the words of God, that is, disdains them and does his own will, or to say it better, the will of the devil? Indeed, St. David thus depicts one who casts behind him the words of God: *If thou sawest a thief, thou didst run with him; and with the adulterer thou hast set thy portion. Thy mouth hath abounded with evil, and thy tongue hath woven deceits. Thou didst sit down and speak against thy brother, and against thine own mother's son didst thou lay a stumbling-block; these things thou didst, and I kept silence. Thou didst think an iniquity, that I should be like unto thee; I will reprove thee, and bring thy sins before thy face. Wherefore, understand these things, ye that forget God, lest He snatch you away and there be none to deliver you* (Ps. 49:19-23).

Do you see how such a one has forgotten God and is worthy to receive greater punishment than the godless who do not know God at all? For, having known God, as the Apostle says, he does not glorify Him as God, but rather abuses Him, doing

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the works of the devil. Therefore he is an enemy of God, even though he might seem to be the most trustworthy teacher of divine dogmas and Orthodox theology. And it is impossible that such a one should faithfully proclaim the divine dogmas and theologize; for how is it possible that a mind which is darkened by a defiled conscience should think rightly and purely? Only he who has been released from the works of the devil and constantly contains God in his memory can faithfully proclaim the mysteries of God as no longer being bound by the works of the devil. From these works may we all sometime also be delivered and receive the Kingdom of Heaven in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom may there be glory forever. Amen.



THE EATING OF THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT
Fresco from the Church of the Resurrection,
Sucevitsa Monastery, Romania

HOMILY 37

The Ancestral Sin and Our Regeneration

1. MAN LOST THE TRUTH AFTER HE WAS BANISHED FROM PARADISE.

BECAUSE ADAM believed the devil who had told him his lies, and tasted of the tree of knowledge, therefore, as one who had believed a liar, he fell away from the truth. After this, human nature labored a great deal seeking the truth but could not find it. This is clearly confirmed by all the wise men of Greece, who could by no means harmonize, unify, and direct on the right path the varieties of human wisdom, despite the fact that many used means for this end and wrote a multitude of lengthy works in which they examined virtue and vice from all points of view.

Truth is from God. It is contained in the Word of God, and it is attained by the grace of Christ. Grace in Christ Jesus, by its unutterable power, simplified the many separate and complex views, corrected and united them in a kind of physical and unshakable unity, showing thereby that all other means and approaches for this are ineffective, impractical, and useless. Those who are guided by these means embark on investigations

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in order to find the truth, but they do not succeed in finding it: it rightly is concealed from them. For since man of his own will and without any violence accepted a lie and believed it, he was condemned to seek the truth and not to find it; to run in pursuit of it and not to attain it. And in addition, since truth has been concealed from us because we believed lies, in the same way truth is again found by us when we believe in truth. Adam believed a lie which was hidden and not obvious; but we believe in a great and evident mystery—in God Incarnate. That lie in itself contained an implausibility because it went against the direct commandment of God; while this great mystery of the Incarnation of Christ has the witness of its truth from the name of God. That lie, as soon as Adam believed that it was truth, was immediately revealed as a lie, because the one who believed it was cast down by it into corruption and death; while this mystery, being believed, is revealed as truth because it delivers the one who believes it from corruption and death, since by its power sin is taken away from the believer and there is given to him the blessed state, or righteousness. Thus both the truth and the lie are evident by their ends.

2. THE SIN OF THE DEVIL AND THE SIN OF ADAM.

If you will understand what kind of sin the devil committed, and what kind Adam committed, you will find nothing else but pride alone. But the devil and Adam became proud by reason of the great glory which they were vouchsafed in abundance. Being clothed with glory, not after humility and disgrace—for this very reason they became proud. They had never seen humility and did not know what this humility and disgrace might be which follow when one is thrown down from the heights of glory; therefore, not having the fear which comes



CHRIST, THE SUPREME HUMILITY (Detail)

Icon from the Moscow School, ca. 1570.

Kolomenskoe Museum of the 16th-17th centuries, Moscow.

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from this happening, they became proud. Just think, then, how great was the humility of the Lord Jesus when He, being God, humbled Himself even to voluntary death and died on the Cross a death which served as punishment for the worst kind of people. And thus, there was one sin, pride, and one virtue, great humility. But who among us, since we now find ourselves in such belittlement and poverty, will begin to be proud, unless he be senseless and a fool? In the present life no one has the divine power in himself to manifest a brilliant glory, and there is no one who is clothed with glory before humility and disgrace; but every man who is born in this world is born inglorious and insignificant, and only later, little by little, advances and becomes glorious.

3. A MAN IS SINFUL FROM HIS VERY CONCEPTION.

Therefore, if anyone, having experienced beforehand such disgrace and insignificance, shall then become proud, is he not senseless and blind? That saying that calls no one sinless except God, even though he has lived only one day on earth, does not refer to those who sin personally, because how can a one-day-old child sin? But in this is expressed that mystery of our Faith, that human nature is sinful from its very conception. God did not create man sinful, but pure and holy. But since the first-created Adam lost this garment of sanctity, not from any other sin but from pride alone, and became corruptible and mortal, all people also who come from the seed of Adam are participants of the ancestral sin from their very conception and birth. He who has been born in this way, even though he has not yet performed any sin, is already sinful through this ancestral sin.

4. AND MAN IS REBORN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN HOLY BAPTISM.

For this reason there has come another birth, or rebirth, which regenerates man through Holy Baptism by the Holy Spirit, again unites him with the Divine nature as it was when he was created by the hands of God, restores all the powers of his soul, renews them and brings them to the condition in which they were before the transgression of first-created Adam; in this way it leads him into the Kingdom of God, into which no one unbaptized can enter, and enlightens him with its light and grants him to taste its joys. Thus each one who is baptized again becomes such as Adam was before the transgression, and is led into the noetic Paradise and receives the commandment to work it and keep it—to work it by fulfillment of the commandments of Jesus Christ Who has recreated him, and to keep it by the keeping of the grace of the Holy Spirit which was given to him through Holy Baptism, confessing that the power of this grace which dwells in him fulfills together with him the commandments of Christ. In this consists the keeping. And as it is impossible for a house to stand without a foundation, so also it is impossible for the soul which believes in Christ to manifest a God-pleasing life if in it there will not be laid as a foundation the grace of the Holy Spirit. For fasting, and vigils, and sleeping on the floor, and prostrations, and praying, and every other suffering of evil is nothing without Divine grace. And if you hear that anyone after evident Christian works has fallen away from Christ, know that at that time he was without the grace of God. For the Holy Spirit gives life to the soul, as the soul gives life to the body; and the soul becomes strong, firm, and constant.

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Great is this mystery. Let man be reverent before it, let him pay heed to it and preserve it. By this grace of the Holy Spirit there is performed in the heart the sacrifice of praise, and the heart itself is made pure, contrite, and humble, and knowing that it has nothing of its own it cannot be exalted in pride. This humility of a heart that is contrite and belittles itself, this humility that is true and not for show, not out of vainglory, is precisely the sacrifice of praise which is offered to God. Impure before the Lord is not every sinner, but rather everyone who is high-minded and proud, because there is no one without sin. But one who is humble of heart is righteous and acts righteously, for he is filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit which instructs him in every good and strengthens it in him. This grace gives to him that holy thing *without which no one may behold the Lord* (Hebrews 12:14). Therefore it is said: *Let the impious one be taken away, lest he see the glory of the Lord* (Isaiah 26:10). And who is this impious one? The one who is high-minded, in whom the degree of impiety is equal to the degree of his pride; and, on the contrary, in the one who is humble of heart, the degree of piety is equal to the degree of his humility.

But who is this one who is humble of heart? Not the wise man, not the one who knows much, not the scholar, not the artist, not the workman—but he who has the grace of the Holy Spirit which, cleansing the soul of every sin and teaching it to live righteously and God-pleasingly, gives to it true wisdom and knowledge and ability to act.

5. WHAT WAS IT THAT THE KINGS AND PROPHETS DESIRED BEFORE THE COMING OF CHRIST?

It was for this that the Son of God became man and died, giving Himself as redemption for the whole of human nature.

However, His death was an indispensable sacrifice also for the pious ones who died before His coming in the flesh. For after the transgression of Adam no one even among the righteous could be saved, since all men were subject to the sin of the forefather Adam, to corruption and death, and the fiery sword allowed no one into the Paradise from which Adam had been banished, since those holy mansions of Paradise receive only souls which are immaculate and pure from every sin, as the Apostle says: *Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption* (I Cor. 15:50). Therefore, it was necessary that the incorruptible Son of God, by means of His corruptible flesh, should be given as a sacrifice so as to redeem those righteous ones from corruption. For by themselves they could not again come into the incorruption from which Adam had fallen away; but this was the work of the great dispensation of Christ, which was performed with true judgment and righteousness. And for those who were born after the Nativity of Christ, He also is a sacrifice and food by means of the communion of the most pure Mysteries, in which he renews and recreates man through the union into which He enters with those who receive Communion; and by the unutterable power of the creative Divinity He most intimately joins them with Himself, that is, makes them gods by grace, just as fire through its penetration makes into fire those hard bodies which receive it and are penetrated by it, as for example, iron, bronze, and similar things, it makes fire. However, He does not change their nature, but causes only that they, as long as they are in such union with the fire, are themselves fire. And this is what the prophets, kings, and righteous ones desired who were before Christ, since they foresaw those who were to be flesh of the flesh of Christ, and bone of His bones, and they saw themselves deprived of such a great good thing.

6. A SPIRITUAL FATHER SHOULD FIRST OF ALL INSTRUCT THOSE COMING TO CONFESSION AND TEACH THEM THE MYSTERY OF FAITH, AND THEN LAY UPON THEM A PENANCE.

For those who have been instructed in this great mystery of Christianity and, having understood it, have become believers and faithful to it and later fell, being men who bear flesh--there is no other means to restore what has been lost than repentance in everything in which they have sinned. They should hasten to the spiritual physician and, having confessed their sin and opened their wound to him, they should with submission and desire accept the penance which is in accordance with the canons, such as their spiritual father will lay upon them, because these penances unloose the bonds of sin and serve for the wounds as a suitable treatment for the soul, so that they may be healed. It is essential, I say, that those who sin after Baptism bear a penance, because they have already been enlightened and have *tasted of the heavenly gift* (Heb. 6:4), that is, in experience have known the power of Christ, and therefore they should have manfully stood against temptation and not sinned, as the Apostle says, *Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under sin, but under grace* (Rom. 6:14).

If they had not disdained the grace of God which they had already known, then it would not have allowed them to sin. They made themselves guilty of the blood of Christ after they had cleansed their conscience from dead works so as to serve the living and true God. Therefore, they have need of a second cleansing through repentance, which is joined with labors and sweat, with groans and tears, so that each of them might say to God, *Behold my lowliness and my toil, and forgive all my sins* (Ps. 24:18). This is necessary not because God has need of the labors

and sweat of the one who repents, but so that the one who is repenting, having received the grace of God without labor, might not again disdain it as before and might not for this be condemned eternally to burn in the unquenchable fire of hell.

But those who do not know the mystery of Christianity, which means the greater part of those who have been baptized, who are called "Christians" as being baptized but have not been taught the Christian teaching and remain totally ignorant, and, I will say so, unenlightened (enlightened by Baptism, but not enlightened by knowledge), because they do not know and do not understand in truth what the mystery of Christianity is—when such ones in repenting confess their sins committed by them after Baptism, one should not bind their spirit too much and lay upon them difficult penances, because this will not be profitable for them, since they, being not instructed and not enlightened, and not having knowledge of the mystery of Christ, cannot feel as is proper these bindings and penances. They believe in ignorance, and in ignorance they sinned, and inasmuch as they sinned without understanding, they cannot understand as is fitting the sensibleness of their spiritual treatment.

And thus, for those who are instructed and enlightened and know the mystery of Christianity, according to the measure of their knowledge and their sin, that is, judging by what kind of knowledge and awareness they have of the mystery of Christianity and how severe a sin they have committed—for these ones are required the bindings and the treatments and the scorching and the suffering of evil, that is, fasts, vigils, lying on the floor, bending of the knee, and the rest. But for those who did not know and were not instructed in the mystery of Christianity, there are required in future instruction, announcement of the teaching of the faith, and enlightenment, and only after this the canonical penances. For it is senseless to bind and scorch, that

is, to lay a penance according to the canons upon one who is unable to feel, just as it is senseless to give treatment to a dead person.

However, as the divine Paul says, *As many as have sinned in the law*, that is, with knowledge of the mystery of Faith and Christianity, *shall be judged by the law*, that is, they must be judged and given penances according to all the strictness of the sacred canons. But those who *have sinned without the law*, that is, do not know everything that pertains to faith and that is essential for salvation and have not been instructed in it, *shall also perish without the law* (Rom. 2:12), that is, even without the application to them of all the strictness of the canons, they will perish (if they do not repent), even though they might uselessly offer in their defense the fact that they did not know how they were obliged to act; for the Lord says, *This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations* (Matt. 24:14). If in this way the nations are condemned (for ignorance), all the more will those Christians be condemned who, being in the enclosure of the Church of Christ, do not know the true teaching of Christian piety because they did not take care to be instructed in it in the proper way, out of carelessness and disdain for such a great work which was performed for us by the Son of God. For them, He, being God, became man and endured extreme mockery, dying on the Cross as if He were an evildoer.

7. EVERY CHRISTIAN MUST RECEIVE A DIVINE CHANGE.

It is a great good thing to believe in Christ, because without faith in Christ it is impossible for anyone to be saved; but one must also be instructed in the word of truth and understand it. It is a good thing to be instructed in the word of truth, and to

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understand it is essential; but one must also receive Baptism in the name of the Holy and Life-giving Trinity, for the bringing to life of the soul. It is a good thing to receive Baptism and through it a new spiritual life; but it is necessary that this mystical life, or this mental enlightenment in the spirit, also should be consciously felt. It is a good thing to receive with feeling the mental enlightenment in the spirit; but one must manifest also the works of light. It is a good thing to do the works of light; but one must also be clothed in the humility and meekness of Christ for a perfect likeness to Christ. He who attains this and becomes meek and humble of heart, as if these were his natural dispositions, will unfailingly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven and into the joy of His Lord.

Moreover, regarding all those who are running on the path of God according to the order I have indicated, if it happens that natural death should cut off their course in the midst of this, they will not be banished from the doors of the Kingdom of God, and these doors will not be closed before them, according to the limitless mercy of God. But regarding those who do not run in such a way, their faith also in Christ the Lord is vain, if they have such. To Him may there be ever glory, honor and worship, with His Unoriginate Father and the Life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.



THE TEMPTATION OF ADAM AND EVE
Detail from an 18th-century Russian icon.

HOMILY 38

The Fall of Adam and the Decrees of God

1. EACH OF US MUST RECOGNIZE THAT HE IS ADAM IN ORDER TO BE OF CHRIST.

IF ANY OF US does not recognize that he is Adam, the one who sinned before God in Paradise, how can he recognize and think that the coming down of the Son and Word of God was for him? A law was established after the Fall, that just as each of us is Adam, that is, a corruptible and mortal man, not by reason of our own sin, but by reason of the disobedience of our first ancestor Adam, from whose seed we come; so each of us is of Christ, immortal and incorrupt, not for the sake of our own virtues, but for the sake of the obedience of the second Adam, Who is Christ our Lord Who came down from Heaven; we become bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. And just as corruption and death come down from generation to generation from the old Adam, so also incorruption and immortality come down to Christians from the new Adam. Just as the fact that we are participants in the nature of our ancestor Adam who fell is recognized by the sign that we also sin and transgress the commandments of God, so also the fact that we are participants

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of the Divine grace of the second Founder of our race, Christ the Lord, we recognize by this sign: that we no longer sin as soon as we receive this Divine grace.* We draw from the fullness of Christ, just as from some kind of source of fire a myriad of lights might be lit. And the more of them are lit, the more the source abounds in fire and gushes it forth from itself: for Christ, being God, is superabundant in every good.

2. THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION OF THE SON AND WORD OF GOD HAS AS ITS AIM TO RECREATE THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIM, AND MAKE THEM INCORRUPT AND IMMORTAL.

He, not shunning everything existing, deigned to go into the most pure womb of the Ever-Virgin, to be born, to be nourished with milk, to grow and become a man, likewise to thirst, to hunger, to be weighed down by labors, to pour out sweat; then to be subjected to the envy of the Jews for the miracles which He performed in showing His Divinity, to be hung upon the Cross as if He were an evil-doer, together with thieves, to die a shameful death by His own will, to be buried, to rise again, and to ascend into Heaven so as to send down

* Ed. Note: St. Symeon himself in other Homilies makes it clear that he, and Christians in general, remain sinners before God and continue to sin. Therefore, his meaning here is not that Orthodox Christians never sin, but that they do not sin as long as Christ's grace is active in them: when a Christian falls into sin, it is a sign that grace has left him. The whole struggle of Christian life, as St. Symeon teaches (Homily 2, section 3) is to *preserve God's grace* and, when we find ourselves losing it, to re-acquire it. This is the same as the teaching of the Apostle John that *whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin* (I John 3:9), and yet *if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us* (I John 1:8).

upon believers the Holy Spirit Who proceeds from the Father, Whom indeed He sent. For it was the aim and end of the entire Dispensation of Christ's Incarnation that the Holy Spirit might be received in the souls of those who believe in Christ as God and man, a single Christ in two natures, Divine and human, indivisible and unconfused, so that this Holy Spirit might be, as it were, the soul of the soul of believers, and that they for this reason might be called Christians, and so that (by the activity of this Holy Spirit) they, to some extent, might be recast, recreated, renewed and sanctified, in mind, conscience, and in all their senses, so that after this they should no longer have in themselves any kind of corrupt life which could raise in their souls an inclination and desire for fleshly enjoyments and worldly lusts.

Every man, from the first day of his birth (from the moment of his conception), is already subject to corruption and death, and there is required a great and Divine power so as to recreate him for incorruption and immortality. If anyone, together with the growth of his body, should grow also in evil, in him, of course, the power of corruption and the dominion of death also increase and become even more powerful. This is so because according to the measure of the corruption which one develops in oneself, the sting of death also enters into one to a greater or lesser extent. If now a small and innocent child has need of Divine power so as to be delivered from corruption, then what greater power is required for one who together with his growth in age has grown also in evil, and together with it and through it has grown also in corruption? This corruption is what the ancestor of God, David, calls in his Psalms bonds and sackcloth, when he calls out to God, *Thou hast broken my bonds asunder; I shall offer a sacrifice of praise unto Thee* (Ps. 115:7-8); that is, I shall give thanks to Thee and glorify Thee because Thou hast loosed my bonds, that is, corruption. And again, *Thou didst*

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rend my sackcloth and didst gird me with gladness, that my glory may chant unto Thee, and that I may not be pierced with sorrow (Ps. 29:12,13); that is, Thou hast divested me of the sackcloth which I was wearing, that is, corruption, and girded me with joy, that I might glorify Thee—not I, but the Holy Spirit through me—because the joy and glory received by David from God was the Holy Spirit; and having Him within himself, he says, *that I may not be pierced with sorrow* (I shall have no need to repent), that is, I shall not sin.

And so, it is absolutely necessary for everyone to use all possible efforts so as to receive from above, from Christ God, this rejoicing and glory, that is, the grace of the Holy Spirit, in order to have power to sin no more. For that which anyone does out of free will he may also annihilate through free will; but what is from nature cannot be annihilated by free will. If now man has become corrupt and mortal in nature, he cannot by the power of free will alone become incorruptible and immortal. And from the time of the banishment of Adam from Paradise, that is, from the time when he became corruptible and mortal by reason of his transgression, even up to the present day, not a single man has ever been incorrupt and immortal.

3. THE DECREES OF GOD BECOME THE LAW OF NATURE.

And thus, if it is needful for man again to come into the original condition in which he was created, that is, to become incorrupt, no human free will whatsoever can raise him up into this condition, but only a Divine power received by him through a mingling with the Divine nature. The Divine nature is powerful to conquer the mortality of human nature, and to call him again into his original condition. The words and decrees of God become the law of nature. Therefore, the decree

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of God uttered by Him as result of the disobedience of the first Adam, the decree to him, of death and corruption, became a law of nature eternal and unchanging. Therefore, for the abolition of this decree, the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, was crucified and died, offering Himself as a sacrifice for the redemption of man from death, a sacrifice frightful and infinitely great. The decree of God, *Thou art dust, and to the dust shalt thou return*, just like everything laid upon man after the Fall, will be in effect until the end of the age. But by God's mercy, through the power of the extraordinary sacrifice of Christ, in the future age it will no longer have any effect, when the general resurrection will occur, which resurrection could not possibly occur unless the Son of God Himself had risen from the dead, Who had died for the abolition of the above-mentioned decree and for the resurrection of the entire human nature, since He Who rose was a man, that is, Christ, just as the one who originally died was a man, that is, Adam, both the one and the other including in themselves the whole human race.

4. WHICH DECREES OF GOD ARE AGAIN ABOLISHED BY HIM, AND BY WHAT MEANS?

However, let everyone know that after the Dispensation of the Incarnation (of Christ), there is time to abolish still in this life the decrees of God which concern chastisements for sins. The decrees of God which were laid upon the first man Adam, who sinned in Paradise while he was leading a life without care, are rightly not abolished in this life and are set down for mankind as a law of nature. But the decrees of Christ, after the Dispensation of the Incarnation, which were laid upon us who are in this miserable life, can yet be abolished in this age. And every Christian, if he has fallen under them, should take care with all fervor and effort that they might be removed from him

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while he is still here; for they are incomparably more terrible than the former decrees, since they are extended unto unending ages. If the former decrees, which deprived man of temporal life, that is, the decrees of death and corruption, seem unbearable, then the decree of eternal and unending punishments which will be imposed in the future age will be all the more heavy and unbearable for those who will have to experience them!

What precisely these decrees are, listen now. Our Lord Jesus Christ says, *Whosoever shall say to his brother, thou fool, shall be in danger of the gehenna of fire* (Matt. 5:22). This means that one who has said this to his brother, as soon as he has said it, immediately has already become subject to eternal torment. But this decision or decree of God's judgment loses effect as soon as one repents and resolves with such determination no longer to say to one's brother, "thou fool," that he would rather die than call one's brother-Christian "thou fool." In the same way, that is, through repentance, contrition, and the determination to refrain from sins, all other decrees of Christ's judgment also lose effect.

But let it be known to us that only here in the present life where there is a transgression of God's commandments, only here is there the abolition of the frightful decrees of judgment for them, because of God's limitless mercy and for the sake of sincere and perfect repentance. But upon him who does not repent here these decrees shall unfailingly be fulfilled. Without fail, he who worships God in unrighteousness will be punished as an impious one; he who looks upon a woman with lust will be punished as a fornicator; the extortioner will be punished as an idol-worshipper. Moreover, if someone were to repent of such or similar sins, but at the same time should be un-merciful, without compassion and hard-hearted, that is, should return evil for evil and not forgive his enemy—in such a case he will

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not receive any benefit whatever from his repentance, but all his repentance will be in vain, according to the decree of the Lord Who says, *With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged* (Matt. 7:2). And not only this, but something even worse may happen: It may happen that someone, having sincerely repented, will obtain mercy from God and receive the forgiveness of all his debt of sin; but if after this he will be uncompassionate and unmerciful to others and will not forgive them in whatever they have sinned against him, he himself will dissolve the merciful condescension of God to him as well as the forgiveness which was manifested to him by God, as the Holy Gospel says: *Shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors* (Matt. 18:33-34).

May the Lord grant us to repent of our sins, and be compassionate and merciful to our neighbors, that we may be vouchsafed to receive also eternal blessedness in Christ Himself, the True God, to Whom may there be glory forever. Amen.



THE BANISHMENT FROM PARADISE
Detail from an 18th-century Russian icon.

Homily 45

Adam and the First-Created World

1. ON THE CREATION OF THE WORLD AND THE CREATION OF ADAM

GOD, IN THE BEGINNING, before He planted Paradise and gave it over to the first-created ones, in five days set in order the earth and what is on it, and the heaven and what is in it. And on the sixth day He created Adam and placed him as lord and king of the whole visible creation. Then there was not yet Paradise. But this world was from God as a kind of Paradise, although it was material and sensuous. God gave it over to the authority of Adam and all his descendants, as the Divine Scripture says, *And God said, let us make man according to Our image and likeness, and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the flying creatures of heaven, and the beasts and cattle and all the earth, and all the reptiles that creep upon the earth. And God made man, according to the image of God He made him; male and female He made them. And God blessed them, saying, Increase and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the seas, and the flying creatures of heaven, and all the cattle and all the earth.*

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Do you see how God gave over to man at the beginning this whole world as a kind of Paradise? Therefore, immediately after this He says also, *Behold I have given to you every seed-bearing herb with seed which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree which has in itself the fruit of the seed that is sown, to you it shall be for food. And to all the wild beasts of the earth, and to all the flying creatures of heaven, and to every reptile that creeps upon the earth, even every green plant for food* (Gen. 1:26-30). Do you see how everything visible which is on the earth, and that is in the sea—everything God gave over into the authority of Adam and his descendants? For what He said to Adam He said to all of us, just as to the Apostles He said, *What I say unto you I say unto all* (Mark 13:37), because He knew that our race was to increase and that there was to be an innumerable multitude of men.

If now, after we transgressed the commandment and were condemned to die, people have so multiplied, then just imagine how many there would have been if all those born from the creation of the world had not died! And what kind of life they would have lived, being immortal and incorrupt, strangers to sin, sorrows, cares, and difficult necessities! And how, prospering in the keeping of the commandments and the good ordering of the dispositions of the heart, in time they would have ascended into the most perfect glory, and being changed, would have drawn near to God; and the soul of each one would have become light-bearing by reason of the illuminations which would have been poured out upon it from the Divinity! And this sensuous and crudely material body would have become as it were immaterial and spiritual, above all senses; and the joy and rejoicing with which we then would have been filled by fellowship one with the other, in truth would have been unutterable and beyond human thought. But let us return again to our subject.

And thus God gave over to Adam this whole world which had been created by Him in six days, concerning which creation listen to what the Divine Scripture says: *And God saw all the things that He had made, and behold, they were very good.... And God finished on the sixth day His works which He made, and He rested on the seventh day from all His works which He made* (Gen. 1:31, 2:2). And further the same Scripture, desiring to instruct us as to how God made man, says: *And God made man of the dust of the earth, and breathed upon his face the breath of life, and the man became a living soul* (Gen. 2:7).

Then He does as some king or prince or rich man who, possessing any kind of place, does not assign it all for one and the same use, but divides it into many parts, and assigns one part for sowing, on another plants vineyards, and another leaves untilled so that it might be overgrown with grass and give pasture, but the best and most beautiful he chooses for the building of his palace, near which he plants flower beds and gardens, and he devises much else and arranges what can give satisfaction. And his place and all the rooms in it he arranges in the best fashion, so that it might be distinct from the dwellings of other men. All this he surrounds with a wall, with gates and locks, and next to them he places guards so that evil men might not be let in, but entrance might be given only to good men, acquaintances and friends. So also did God, in similar fashion arrange for the first-created man. For after He had created everything else, and made man also, and rested on the seventh day from all the works which He had begun to do, He planted Paradise in Eden in the East as a royal dwelling, and led into it as king the man whom He had made.

But why did not God put in order Paradise on the seventh day, but planted it in the East only after He had finished all the rest of the creation? Because He, as the Foreknower of everything, arranged the whole creation in order and in an orderly

sequence, and He assigned seven days that they might be an image of the ages which were subsequently to pass in time. But Paradise He planted after those seven days, that it might be an image of the future age. But why did the Holy Spirit not place the eighth day together with the seven days in the count? Because it was unfitting to place within the count the eighth together with the seven, for they, moving cyclicly, produce so many weeks, years, and centuries, but it was proper that the eighth day be placed outside the seven, since it does not have any cyclic movement.

Behold yet more: the Divine Scripture does not say that God created Paradise, nor that He said "Let it be," but rather that He "planted" it: *And God planted Paradise in Eden in the East... And God made to spring up also out of the earth every tree beautiful to the eye and good for food* (Gen. 2:8-9), with various fruits which never spoiled and never ceased, but were always fresh and sweet and furnished for the first-created ones great satisfaction and pleasantness. For it was fitting to furnish also an incorruptible enjoyment for these bodies of the first-created ones, which were incorrupt. Therefore their life also in Paradise was not burdened with labors and not weighed down with misfortunes. Adam was made with a body that was incorrupt, although material and not yet spiritual, and was placed by the Creator God as an immortal king over an incorrupt world, not only over Paradise, but also over the whole of creation which was under the heavens.

2. ON THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE COMMANDMENT AND THE BANISHMENT FROM PARADISE.

God gave the first-created ones a commandment, and commanded them not to taste of the tree of knowledge alone; but

Adam disdained this commandment of God, not believing the words of the Creator and Master, Who said, *In whatsoever day ye eat of it, ye shall surely die*, but respected as more true the word of the evil devil who said, *Ye shall not surely die. But in whatsoever day ye eat of it, ye shall become as gods, knowing good and evil*, and he tasted of that tree. Therefore he was immediately stripped of that incorrupt garment and glory, and was clothed in the nakedness of corruption; and seeing himself naked, he hid himself, and sewing together fig leaves he girded himself so as to cover his shame. Therefore, when God called out to him, *Adam, where art thou?* he replied, *I heard Thy voice and I feared because I was naked, and I hid myself*. God, calling him to repentance, said to him, *Who told thee that thou wast naked, unless thou hast eaten of the tree concerning which I charged thee of it alone not to eat?* But Adam did not wish to say, "I sinned," but said rather the contrary of this and placed the blame for the transgression upon God Who created everything "very good," saying to Him, *The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I ate*. And after him she also placed the blame upon the serpent, and they did not wish at all to repent and, falling down before the Lord God, beg forgiveness of Him. For this God banished them from Paradise, as from a royal palace, to live in this world as exiles. At that time also He decreed that a flaming sword should be turned and should guard the entrance into Paradise. And God did not curse Paradise, since it was the image of the future unending life of the eternal Kingdom of Heaven. If it were not for this reason, it would have been fitting to curse it most of all, since within it was performed the transgression of Adam. But God did not do this, but cursed only the whole rest of the earth, which also was incorrupt and brought forth everything by itself; and this was in order that Adam might not have any longer a life free from exhausting labors and sweat. *Cursed is the ground in thy labors,*

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said the Lord to Adam; *in pain shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread until thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken; for earth thou art, and unto earth thou shalt return* (Gen. 3:17-19).

And thus it was fitting in all justice for the one who had become corruptible and mortal by reason of the transgression of the commandment, to live upon the corruptible earth and be nourished with corruptible food; for since a life without labor and an abundant food which grew by itself had caused him to forget God and the good things which He had given him and to disdain His commandment, he was therefore justly condemned to work the earth in the sweat of labor and in this way receive from it food little by little as from some kind of steward. Do you see how then the earth received the criminal after it had been cursed and had been deprived of its original productivity by which fruits were produced from it by themselves without labor? And why was this? In order that it might be worked by him in sweat and labors and thus give him that little which it grows for his need, for the support of life, and if it will not be worked, to remain fruitless and to grow only thorns and thistles.

Then also all creatures, when they saw that Adam had been banished from Paradise, no longer wished to submit to him, the criminal: the sun did not wish to shine for him, nor did the moon and the other stars wish to show themselves to him; the springs did not wish to gush forth water, and the rivers to continue their course; the air thought no longer to blow so as not to allow Adam, the sinner, to breathe; the beasts and all the other animals of the earth, when they saw that he had been stripped of his first glory, began to despise him, and all immediately were ready to fall upon him. The heaven, in a certain fashion, was about to strive to fall upon him, and the earth did



ADAM TILLING THE LAND
after his banishment from Paradise. Fresco from the Church
of St. George, Voronets Monastery, Romania.

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not wish to bear him any longer. But God, Who created everything and made man—what did He do? Knowing before the creation of the world that Adam would transgress His commandment, and having foreordained for him a new life and a re-creation, which things he was to receive in rebirth in Holy Baptism by virtue of the economy of the Incarnation of His only-begotten Son and our God, He restrained all these creatures by His power, and in His compassion and goodness did not allow them immediately to strive against man, and commanded that the creation should remain in submission to him, and having become corrupt, should serve corrupt man for whom it had been created, with the aim that when man again should be renewed and become spiritual, incorrupt and immortal, then also the whole creation, which had been subjected by God to man to serve him, might be delivered from this servitude, might be renewed together with him, and become incorrupt and as it were spiritual. All this the All-Merciful God foreordained before the creation of the world.

And thus when all had been set in order by God, as has been said, Adam was banished from Paradise, lived, begat children and died. And this was the way it was with all those also who came from him. The people of that time, finding out from Adam and Eve about all that had happened, remembered the fall of Adam and bowed down to God and worshipped Him as their Master. Therefore, Abel together with Cain offered God sacrifices, each one from his own possessions. And the Scripture says that God accepted the offering and the sacrifice of Abel, but the sacrifice of Cain He did not accept, which when Cain found out he was sorrowed unto death, began to envy his brother Abel, and killed him. But after this Enoch, having pleased God, *was translated* (Gen. 5:24), as Elias (Elijah) also later was taken into heaven in a fiery chariot. By this God wished to show that if, after the sentence pronounced on Adam and his

descendants, and after his banishment, He was pleased to honor Enoch and Elias, the descendants of Adam who had pleased Him, by translating them and granting them long life, and to deliver them from death and from entering hell—would He not have glorified and honored all the more first-created Adam himself if he had not transgressed the commandment given him, or after the transgression had repented, and would He not have had mercy upon him and left him to live in Paradise?

Thus the men of antiquity, for the course of many years, learned one from the other by tradition, and knew their Creator and God. But later, when people had multiplied and began to give their mind over from their youth into evil thoughts, they forgot God and no longer knew their Creator, and began not only to worship demons, but to deify even such creatures as had been given them by God to serve them. From this they gave themselves over into every impurity and defiled by their unclean works the earth, the air, the heaven, and everything under the heaven. For nothing so defiles and so makes impure the pure works of the hands of God as when someone begins to deify it and worship it like God, Who created the universe. And when finally the whole creation, being thus deified, became impure, and all men had fallen into the extreme abyss of evil—then the Son of God and God came down to earth so as to re-create man who had become so low, to give life to him who had become dead, and to call him from deception and error.

3. ON THE ECONOMY OF THE INCARNATION OF THE LORD, AND OF HOW HE WAS INCARNATE FOR OUR SAKE.

But I beg you to heed my words, because they begin now to touch upon a most great mystery, the explanation of which

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is soul-profitting both for us and for those who will live after us. It befits us now to ascend to the contemplation of the Incarnation of the Son and Word of God, and His unutterable birth from the Ever-Virgin Mother of God, Mary. We must do this by means of some kind of image, and through it draw near to the understanding of the mystery hidden from the ages of the economy of the Incarnation, for the salvation of our race. Just as then, at the creation of our ancestor Eve, God took the rib of Adam and made the woman from it, in the same way now also our Maker and Creator God took flesh from the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, as a kind of leaven and a certain beginning from the dough of our nature, and united it with His Divinity, which is unattainable and unapproachable—or, to say it better, He united His whole Divine Hypostasis essentially with our nature, and this human nature he joined without confusion to His Essence and made it His own, so that the very Creator of Adam became unchangingly and unalterably perfect man. For just as from the rib of Adam He made woman, so from the daughter of Adam, the Ever-Virgin Mother of God Mary, He borrowed the virginal flesh without seed, and being clothed in it, became man like unto the first-created Adam, so as to accomplish this work, namely: just as Adam, through the transgression of the commandment of God was the cause of the fact that all men became corruptible and mortal, so also Christ, the new Adam, through the fulfillment of all justice, became the first-fruit of our rebirth into incorruption and immortality. This the divine Paul explains in the place where he says, *The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly* (I Cor. 15: 47-48). And inasmuch as our Lord Jesus Christ became perfect man in soul and body, like us in everything except sin, so He gives of His Divinity to us also who believe in Him, and makes



The Nativity (Birth) of Christ.
Central Russian icon, 19th century.

us like to Him in the nature and essence of His Divinity. Reflect on this most wondrous mystery: the Son of God received from us flesh, which He did not have by nature, and became man, which He was not, and to those who believe in Him He communicates of His Divinity, which no man ever had in any way—and these believers are gods by grace. For Christ gives to them to be *the sons of God*, as John the Theologian says (John

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1:12, I John 3:2). As a result of this they become and forever afterwards remain gods by grace, and never will they cease to be such. Hear what the Apostle Paul says to us when he says, *As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly* (I Cor. 15:49). What we have said about this is sufficient. Now let us return again to our subject.

Inasmuch as the God of everything existing, our Lord Jesus Christ, came down to earth and became man in order to re-create and renew man and to bring down blessing upon the whole creation which had been subjected to the curse for the sake of man, therefore, first of all He brought to life the soul which He had received, and deified it, while His most pure and divine body, although He made it divine, nevertheless He bore corruptible and crudely material. For the body which eats food, drinks, is labored, sheds sweat, is bound, is beaten, is nailed to the Cross, is evidently corruptible and material, because everything that has been mentioned is the property of a corruptible body. Therefore also it died, and was placed in the grave as dead; and after the Lord's third-day Resurrection, His body also was resurrected incorruptible and divine. Therefore, when He came out of the tomb He did not violate the seals which were on the tomb, and later He came in and went out through closed doors.

But why, together with His soul, did He not immediately make His body incorruptible and spiritual? Because Adam, after transgressing the commandment of God, in soul died immediately, but in body he died only after so many years. Corresponding with this, the Lord and Saviour also first resurrected, brought to life, and deified the soul which immediately after the transgression of the commandment had borne the penance of death; and afterwards God was pleased to arrange that His body also might receive the incorruptibility of resurrection, just as in Adam after many years it had received the

penance of death. But Christ did not do only this; He also descended even to hell, delivered from eternal bonds and brought to life the souls of the saints who were confined there; but their bodies He did not resurrect then, but left them in the tombs until the general resurrection of all.

And this mystery, made evident for the whole world in the way we have related, which occurred at the time of the economy of the Incarnation of Christ, afterwards also was accomplished and is accomplished in every Christian in the same way. For when we receive the grace of Jesus Christ our God, we become participants of His Divinity (II Peter 1:4), and when we eat His most pure Body, that is, when we receive communion of the Holy Mysteries, we are of one body with Him, and in truth akin to Him, as also the divine Paul says, *For we are members of His body*, of His flesh and of His bones (Eph. 5:30), and as again the Evangelist John says, that *of His fullness we have all received* (John 1:16). Thus by grace we become like unto Him, our man-loving God and Lord, and in soul are renewed from being old, and brought to life from being dead as we were.

Thus every saint is as we have said; but their bodies do not become immediately incorruptible and spiritual. Rather, just as iron which has been ignited by fire becomes a partaker of the brightness of fire, putting aside its natural darkness, and as soon as the fire goes out of it and it grows cold, it becomes again dark, so is it also with the bodies of the saints: when they are partakers of that Divine fire, that is, the grace of the Holy Spirit which fills their souls, they are sanctified, and being penetrated with that Divine fire, they are bright, distinct from all other bodies and more honorable than they; but when the soul goes out of the body, then their bodies are given over to corruption, and some decay little by little and become dust, while others do not decay for the course of many years, and are not either completely incorrupt or again completely corrupt, but preserve in

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themselves the traces both of corruption and incorruption, until they receive perfect incorruption and are renewed by the perfect resurrection at the time of the general resurrection of the dead.

And for what reason is this? For this reason: it is not fitting for the bodies of men to be clothed in the glory of the resurrection and to become incorrupt before the renewal of all creatures. But just as in the beginning, first the whole creation was created incorrupt, and then from it man was taken and made, so also it is fitting that again first all the creation should become incorrupt, and then the corruptible bodies of men also should be renewed and become incorrupt, so that once more the whole man might be incorrupt and spiritual and might dwell in an incorruptible, eternal, and spiritual dwelling.

And that this is true, listen to what the Apostle Peter says: *The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up* (II Peter 3:10). This does not mean that the heavens and the elements will disappear, but that they will be reordered and renewed, and will come into a better and an incorruptible condition. And this I say is again evident from the words of the same Apostle Peter, who says: *We look for new heavens and a new earth, according to His promise* (II Peter 3:13), that is, according to the promise of Christ and our God Who said, *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away* (Matt. 24:35)—by the passing away of heaven signifying its change, that is, the heaven will be changed, but My words will not be changed, but will remain forever unchanged. And the holy Prophet David prophesied the same thing where he says, *And as a vesture shalt Thou fold them, and they shall be changed, but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall*

not fail (Ps. 101:27). From such words what else is evident than what I have said?

4. HOW IS THE WHOLE CREATION AGAIN TO BE RENEWED?

But let us see how the creation is to be renewed and come again into the condition of its original beauty. I suppose that there is not a single Christian who will think to disbelieve the words of the Lord Who gave the promise to make the heaven new and the earth new, that is, that just as our own bodies, which are now dissolved into the elements but still are not turned into nothingness, again are to be renewed through the resurrection—so also the heaven and the earth with all that is in them, that is, the whole creation, is to be renewed and to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and these elements together with us will become partakers of the brightness proceeding from the Divine fire. Just as a bronze vessel that has become old and useless, becomes new again when a metal-worker melts it in the fire and recasts it, in the same way also the creation, having become old and useless because of our sins, will be as it were melted in the fire by God the Creator and recast, and will appear new, incomparably brighter than it is now. Do you see how all creatures are to be renewed by fire?

This is why the divine Peter says: *Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy living and godliness?* And a little later he says: *Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in His sight. And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you, as also in his Epistles, speaking in them of these things, wherein are some things hard to be understood, which*

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the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction (II Peter 3:11, 14-16). And this was done not only then, but in the present time also; very many, or almost all of us do it, in our ignorance constantly corrupting and reinterpreting the words of the Divine Scripture, and by all means striving to make them a cooperator in our passions and in our ruinous lusts. But let us see what the divine Paul says about the creation and its renewal.

Having said that *I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*, right after this he says: *For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God* (Rom. 8:18-19). He calls "expectation" the mighty desire of the creation that there might be fulfilled more quickly the revelation or the manifestation in glory of the sons of God which is to occur in the general resurrection. For then, in the general resurrection, with the coming of the Son of God, the sons of God are to be revealed, their beauty and glory are to be manifest, and they will become entirely, that is, in soul and body, light-bearing and most glorious, as has been written: *Then the righteous, that is, the sons of the righteous God, will shine forth like the sun* (Matt. 13:43).

But lest someone should think that what has been said by the Apostle refers to some other kind of creation, he adds: *For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it in hope* (Rom. 8:20). Do you see that the creation did not wish to be subject to and serve Adam after he had transgressed the commandment of God, because it saw that he had fallen from divine glory? It was for this that God, before the creation of the world, foreordained that the salvation of mankind should be through the rebirth which he was to receive by power of the economy of the Incarnation of Christ, and in this hope He subjected the creation to man, and

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subjected it to corruption, since the man for whom it had been created had become corrupt—so that the creation might every year furnish him a corruptible food, presuming that when He should renew man and make him incorrupt, immortal, and spiritual, then, together with him, He would renew also the whole creation and make it eternal and incorrupt. Here is what the Apostle has revealed with the above-cited words: *The creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it in hope.* That is: the creation was subjected to men not by itself, and not by its own will did it become corruptible, give corruptible fruits, and produce thorns and thistles; rather, it submitted to the commandment of God Who ordained this for it in the hope that He would again renew it. So as the more fully to confirm this the Apostle says finally: *That the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God* (Rom. 3:21). Do you see that this whole creation in the beginning was incorrupt and was created by God in the manner of Paradise? But later it was subjected by God to corruption, and submitted to the vanity of men.

5. WHAT IS THE BRIGHT CONDITION THE WHOLE CREATION IS AGAIN TO RECEIVE?

You should know likewise what is to be the glory and the brightly shining state of the creation in the future age. For when it will be renewed, it will not again be the same as it was when it was created in the beginning. But it will be such as, according to the word of the divine Paul, our body will also be. Concerning our body the Apostle says: *It is sown a natural body, but is raised* not as the body of the first-created one was before the transgression of the commandment, that is, material, sensuous, changeable, having need of sensuous food, but *it is raised a*

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spiritual body (I Cor. 15:44) and unchanging, such as was the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, the second Adam, after the Resurrection, He being the first-born from among the dead, which body was incomparably superior to the body of first-created Adam. In the same way also the whole creation, according to the commandment of God, is to be, after the general resurrection, not such as it was created, material and sensuous, but it is to be re-created and to become a certain immaterial and spiritual dwelling, surpassing every sense, and as the Apostle says of us, *We shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye* (I Cor. 15:51). Thus also the whole creation, after it shall burn up in the Divine fire, is to be changed, that there may be fulfilled also the prophecy of David who says that *the righteous shall inherit the earth* (Ps 36:29)—of course, not the sensuous earth. For how is it possible that those who have become spiritual will inherit a sensuous earth? No, they will inherit a spiritual and immaterial earth, so as to have on it a dwelling worthy of their glory after they shall be vouchsafed to receive bodies that are bodiless and above every sense.

Thus the whole creation, after it will be renewed and become spiritual, will become a dwelling which is immaterial, incorruptible, unchanging, and eternal. The heaven will become incomparably more brilliant and bright than it appears now; it will become completely new. The earth will receive a new, unutterable beauty, being clothed in many-formed, unfading flowers, bright and spiritual. The sun will shine seven times more powerfully than now, and the whole world will become more perfect than any word can describe. Having become spiritual and divine, it will become united with the noetic world; it will be a certain mental Paradise, a heavenly Jerusalem, the inalienable inheritance of the sons of God. Such an earth has not been inherited as yet by a single man; we are

all strangers and foreigners. But when the earthly will be united with the heavenly, then also the righteous will inherit that already-renewed earth whose inheritors are to be those meek ones who are blessed by the Lord.

Now, for the time being, some of the earthly is being united with heavenly, and some is yet to be united with it. The souls of the saints, as we have said, even though they are still united with the body in this world, are united with the grace of the Holy Spirit, are renewed, are changed for the better and resurrected from mental death. Later, after separation from the body, they will depart into glory and into the unsetting, brightly shining light. Their bodies, however, are not yet vouchsafed this, but remain in the tombs and in corruption. But they also are to become incorruptible during the general resurrection, when also all this visible and sensuous creation will become incorruptible, and will be united with the heavenly and invisible. This must happen first, and then there will come with power and great glory the most desired and sweetest Jesus Christ, our King and God, to judge the world and to give to each according to his deeds. For this He will divide the renewed creation into many mansions and abodes, as if it were a great house or some kind of royal palace with a multitude of various apartments, and He will give to each his part, according to the brightness and glory acquired by his virtues. Thus, the Kingdom of Heaven will be one, will have a single King over all, Who will be visible from everywhere to all the righteous. He will remain with each of the righteous, and each of the righteous will remain with Him; He will brightly shine in each one, and each one will brightly shine in Him. But woe to those who then will be seen to be outside that heavenly dwelling!



THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE PRIMORDIAL FALL:
Labor, pain in childbirth, inclination toward sin, disease, and death.
Detail from an 18th-century Russian icon.

HOMILY 66

The Banishment and Repentance of Adam and Every Christian

1. CONCERNING THE BANISHMENT OF ADAM FROM PARADISE, AND THAT IF HE HAD REPENTED AFTER TRANSGRESSING THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD, HE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN BANISHED FROM PARADISE.

GOD IN THE BEGINNING created man as the king of everything earthly, and not only of everything earthly, but of everything under the vault of heaven; for the sun also and the moon and the stars were created for man. And so, being king of all this visible world, did man endure from this any kind of harm for his virtue? No, he did not. On the contrary, if he had always given thanks for this to God Who had created him, and had dedicated all of this to Him, he would have advanced yet more in virtues. And if he had not transgressed the commandment of God, of course, he would not have lost the kingdom which he had, and he would not have fallen away from the glory of God. But since he transgressed the commandment of God,

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he was justly banished from Paradise and began to live in labors and cares, and died in banishment.

And now listen, and I will tell you something which no one has yet expressed with complete clarity. The Divine Scripture says: *God said to Adam: Adam, where art thou?* (Gen. 3:9). Why did the Creator of all things say this? Of course, it was in order to dispose Adam to come to his senses, to acknowledge his sin and repent. This is why He said, "Adam, where art thou?" As it were he said, "Adam, enter into yourself, acknowledge your nakedness and understand what a garment and what a glory you have lost. Adam where are you?" In a certain way, as it were, He awakens him and says: "O Adam, come to yourself and confess with humility your sin. Come out of the place where you are hiding. Do you think to hide yourself from Me? Say: 'I have sinned.' "

But he did not say this (or rather, I the wretched one do not say this, because this is my own passion). But what did he say? *I heard the sound of Thee walking in Paradise, and I was afraid, because I am naked; and I hid myself* (Gen. 3:10). And what did God then say to him? *Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee not to eat of it alone?* Do you see, beloved, the compassion of God? When God said to Adam: *Where art thou?* and Adam did not confess his sin, but said, *I heard the sound of Thee walking in Paradise, and I was afraid, because I am naked; and I hid myself*—He did not become angry at him immediately and did not turn away from him, but again asked him, saying, *Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee not to eat of it alone?*

Do you understand the depth of God's wisdom? When Adam said, "I am naked," God said to him: "Why do you say that you are naked, and hide your sin? Do not think that I see only your body, but do not see your heart and your thoughts."

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For Adam was deceived and truly thought that God did not know about his sin, saying to himself as it were: "I will say that I am naked. God, not knowing the reason for this, will ask, 'How did you become naked?' And I will reply to him, 'I do not know.' Thus I will deceive Him and again receive my previous covering. And even if I do not receive this, at least He will not banish me now from Paradise and will not send me to a different place." This is what Adam thought, as now also many people think—and first of all I myself—when we hide our sins.

But God, not desiring that the sin of Adam should be weighed down by this unawareness, said to him: "How did you know that you were naked, if you did not eat of the tree of which it was forbidden to eat?" He, as it were, said to him: "Do you think to hide yourself from me? Do you think I do not know what you have done? Why do you not say: 'I have sinned?' Say, O miserable one: 'Yea, O Master, in truth I have sinned, transgressing Thy commandment; I have obeyed the counsel of my wife and have committed a great sin, acting according to her word and transgressing your own word. Have mercy on me, O God, and forgive me.'"

But he did not say this, did not humble himself, did not become contrite. His heart was hardened, just as mine is, the wretched one. But if he had said this, he would have remained in Paradise and would not have been subjected to those deprivations which he later experienced. By this one phrase, 'I have sinned,' he would have redeemed all the multitude of years which he spent in hell.

Here is what I have promised you to say! But listen a little longer, and you will understand how true my words are. God said to Adam: *In the day that thou eatest of it* (that is, of the forbidden tree) *thou wilt die the death* (Gen. 2:17)—that is, the death of the soul. This happened immediately: Man was stripped of the garment of immortality; God said nothing more

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than that decree, nor did anything special happen after that. God, foreseeing that Adam was to sin, and desiring to forgive him if he repented, did not say anything more than the above. But Adam refused to acknowledge his sin and did not repent even when he was accused by God; for he said, *The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me*—she deceived me (Gen. 3:12).

O woe to his blinded soul! Saying this, he as it were said to God: "Thou Thyself art guilty, because the woman whom Thou gavest me hast deceived me." This very same thing I myself now suffer, wretched and miserable, when I do not desire to be humbled, and to say with my whole soul that I myself am guilty of my perdition. But on the contrary I say: "That person over there inspired me to do or to say this. He advised me and knocked me off the path." Woe to my poor soul which speaks such words filled with sin! O most shameless and irrational words of a shameless and irrational soul!

And after Adam had said this, God said to him, *In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread, till thou returnest to the earth, for out of it thou wast taken. For dust thou art, and to the dust shalt thou return* (Gen. 3:19). As it were He said to him: "I told you to repent in order to remain in your previous condition, but since you are hard of heart and unrepentant, therefore depart from Me. This your departure from Me will be a sufficient chastisement for you; you are dust, and to the dust you will return." Do you understand now that Adam, because he did not repent and did not say "I have sinned," was banished from Paradise, condemned to lead a life in labors and sweat, and to return to the earth from which he was taken?

Then leaving him, God went up to Eve, desiring to reveal whether she should be justly condemned with Adam to banishment because she did not wish to repent. And He said to her: "What is this you have done?"—so that at least she might say, "I have sinned." For what other reason did God say to her such

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words unless to inspire her to say, "O Master, it was from my lack of understanding that I did this, poor and miserable as I am, and disobeyed Thee, my Lord. Have mercy on me and forgive me!" However, she did not say this, but what did she say? *The serpent beguiled me* (Gen. 3:13). O stony insensitivity! You also, Eve, after you agreed to converse with the serpent, who spoke to you words which were against your Master and God, preferred him to God your Creator. You found his counsel better than the commandments of your Lord, and considered it truer than the commandment of God. And you do not acknowledge that you did badly, and you do not repent?! Thus, inasmuch as she also did not wish to say, "I have sinned," therefore she also was banished from the Paradise of delight and removed from God.

Penetrate to the depth of the mysteries of the man-loving God, and know from this that if they had repented, they would not have been banished from Paradise and condemned to return to the earth from which they had been taken. How this may be, now listen.

2. WHAT GOOD WAS BROUGHT TO ADAM BY REPENTANCE, AND WHAT REPENTANCE DID HE OFFER IN BANISHMENT?

Being banished from Paradise, they immediately began to thirst and hunger, to freeze and shiver, to have labors and sweat, and to endure all those difficulties and griefs which we even now endure. Therefore, they soon felt into what a bitter condition they had descended, and to what a great misfortune they had become subject. Then they realized both their own hardness of heart and their lack of repentance, as well as God's unutterable condescension and compassion towards them. Therefore, even walking and sitting outside Paradise, they re-

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pented and shed tears, beat themselves in the face and tore out the hairs of their head, lamenting over their former hardness of heart. And this they did not for one day or two, or for ten days, but for their whole lifetime. For how can one not weep, remembering their meek and condescending Master, that unutterable delight of Paradise, those indescribable good things and beauties of the flowers of Paradise, that carefree life without labor, and that communion with angels? In worldly life, when servants are appointed by an eminent master in order to serve him, as long as they preserve attention, respect, and obedience towards their lord they have boldness before him, enjoy his favor and love, and live with him in peace and satisfaction. But when they become proud and begin to step away from the will of their master and despise their fellow servants, they lose not only their boldness before him, but even his favor and love; and at his order they are banished into a far country where they are subjected to innumerable necessities and sorrows, and the more they suffer and are in misfortunes, the more they feel the bitterness of their condition, remembering the peaceful and satisfied life which they have lost. This same thing was experienced by our first ancestors also, who lived in Paradise and took sweet delight in its great good things. They acknowledged the greatness and value of these good things after they had lost them, being banished from Paradise; then they recognized also the whole greatness of the evil which they had done. Therefore they ceaselessly grieved and wept, calling on God's compassion.

And what did God do, being quick and ready to mercy, and slow to punishment? He foresaw that they would finally become humble and repent, and therefore He foreordained a special means for abolishing His righteous sentence upon them. But He did not immediately bring into execution this foreordained decree, but assigned for this His own place and time and fashion, so as to teach us to love wisdom and not to rise up

against our Creator and God. Just as He foreordained, so later did He do: for those whom He banished from Paradise for their brazenness before Him and their unrepentant heart, since they had humbled themselves and wept over themselves, He arranged a way for the restoration of what had been lost. And this is what it was: The Only-begotten Son and Word of the Unoriginate Father descended from the heavens to earth, and not only became man like them, but even was pleased to endure a violent and shameful death; then He descended into hell, brought them up from there and restored them. And thus, since Christ so suffered for them, as you hear every day, that He returned them from such a distant exile, would He not have had pity on them, if they had repented then in Paradise? How could he not have had pity on them, when He by nature is the Lover of mankind and compassionate, and He created them in order that they might take sweet delight of the good things of Paradise and might glorify their Benefactor?

But so that you might the better understand this and believe my words, hear yet more: If they had repented then, when they were still in Paradise, they would have received again only Paradise and nothing more. But inasmuch as, being banished from Paradise for their lack of repentance, they then repented, wept much and were in great misfortunes, therefore God the Master of all, for their labors and sweat, for the misfortunes which they endured and for their good repentance, was pleased again to honor them and to glorify them so as to cause them to forget the whole evil which they had caused.

And what did He do? Behold how great is God's Love of mankind! Descending to hell and bringing them out, He did not bring them again into the same Paradise from which they had been banished, but He raised them up to the heaven of heavens; and when He sat down at the right hand of His God and Father, He sat them down together with Him. Just think

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what great honor He gave to Adam who by nature was His slave, and vouchsafed him to be God's own father according to His grace-given dispensation. See to what a height our Master Christ raised him up for his repentance, humility, lamentation and tears! O the power of repentance and tears! O the ocean of Love of mankind which is beyond words, and mercy which cannot be traced out!

3. IF ONE TRULY WISHES TO REPENT, HE MUST REPENT.

And not only Adam did God honor and glorify, but also us his sons—those, that is, who have begun to please him by repentance, tears, lamentation and by all of which we have spoken; and even up to now He glorifies and honors like Adam those who repent well and do what Adam did. Further, those who up until now and in the future will do this and repent, whether they be laymen or monks, He will glorify like Adam, as He Himself, our true God, has said: "Truly I say to you, I will not leave them ever, but show them to be My brethren and friends, fathers and mothers, kinsmen and co-inheritors. I have glorified them and will glorify them, both in the heavens on high and on the earth below; and of their life and rejoicing and glory there shall be no end."

Tell me, then, my brother: What profit was there for our first ancestors in that laborless and carefree life which they had in Paradise, when they were careless, disdained God by not believing Him, and transgressed His commandment? For if they had believed Him, Eve would not have considered the serpent to be more trustworthy than God, Adam would not have believed Eve rather than God, and they would have refrained from eating of the forbidden tree. But they ate and did not repent, and for this they were banished from Paradise.

THE BANISHMENT AND REPENTANCE OF ADAM

Moreover, from banishment also they received no harm, but great benefit. This is by power of the dispensation of our salvation. For our Master Christ descended from the heavens, by His death loosed the bonds of our death, and took away the condemnation which came down to us from the transgression of our first parents; by the power of holy Baptism He regenerated us, recreated us and delivered us from every condemnation and made us in this world completely free, so that our enemy the devil might no longer act in us and against us by violence and force. He honored us with the same autonomy which was given us in the beginning, and He gave us more power against the enemy than all the saints had who lived before the dispensation of Christ, so that those who desire might easily conquer the enemy. And when such ones die they do not descend to hell like the ancients, but ascend to the heavens and are vouchsafed to receive the repose and eternal joy which are there—only to a certain degree at the present time, but completely and entirely after the resurrection.

And so let no one invent excuses for his sins and say that we, by virtue of the transgression of Adam, are entirely subject to the action of the devil and are dragged by force into sin. They who think and speak thus consider that the dispensation of the Incarnation of our Master and Saviour Jesus Christ was useless and in vain. Such an opinion is the opinion of heretics and not of the Orthodox. For what other reason did Christ descend and become incarnate, and for what else did He suffer if not in order to loose the condemnation which proceeded from sin, and to deliver our race from slavery to the devil and from the activity in us of this our enemy? This is true autonomy: in no way to be subject to someone else. We are all born sinners from our forefather Adam who sinned; we are all criminals from a criminal, slaves of sin from a slave of sin, subject to the curse and death from him who was subject to the curse and death. And

THE FIRST-CREATED MAN

because of Adam who received the action of the cunning devil, and by his counsel was moved to sin, and enslaved himself to him and lost his autonomy—we also, as his children, are subject to the action and the compulsory dominion of the devil and are his slaves. But our Lord came down from the heavens, was incarnate and became man like us in everything except sin, in order to annihilate sin. He was conceived and born so as to sanctify the conception and birth of men. He was raised up and grew little by little so as to bless every age of life. He began to preach at the age of thirty, having become a full-grown man, so as to teach us not to jump out of line and go before those who are greater than us in mind and virtue, that is, are more intelligent and virtuous than we, especially if we are still young and not perfect in understanding and virtue. He preserved all the commandments of His God and Father so as to loose every transgression and to deliver us criminals from condemnation. He became a slave, took the form of a slave, in order to raise us, the slaves of the devil, once more into the condition of masters and to make us masters and possessors over the devil himself, our former tyrant. (This is confirmed by the saints who have cast out the devil, as a weak and infirm one, as well as his servants, not only in their lifetime but also after their death.) He was hung upon a cross and became a curse, as the prophet says: *Cursed is everyone that hangeth upon a tree* (Deut. 21:23), in order to loose the whole curse of Adam. He died in order to put death to death, and He rose in order to annihilate the power and activity of the devil who had authority over us by means of death and sin.

Thus our Lord, having cast into the midst of the death-dealing poison of sin the unutterable and life-giving activity of His Divinity and His Flesh, has liberated our race from the working of the devil; and purifying us by holy Baptism and bringing us to life by the communion of the most pure Mysteries of His

THE BANISHMENT AND REPENTANCE OF ADAM

precious Body and Blood, He makes us holy and sinless. But He then leaves us again to have autonomy, so that it might not seem that we serve our Master by compulsion, but rather by our own free will. Therefore, as in the beginning Adam in Paradise was free and sinless, and by his free will obeyed the enemy, was deceived and transgressed the commandment of God—so on the contrary we, being regenerated by holy Baptism, delivered from slavery and becoming free, if we do not obey by our own free will our enemy the devil, this cunning one will in no way be able to place in us any kind of evil.

Now, before the law and the coming of Christ, without the aid of those means of which we have spoken, many and very many pleased God and manifested themselves as irreproachable; among their number the righteous Enoch was honored by God by being translated, and Elias was raised to heaven in a fiery chariot. Therefore, what kind of justification can we give, if after the manifestation of grace, after such and so great benefactions, after the annihilation of death and sin, we do not manifest ourselves as holy; if after being regenerated by the holy Baptism which we have received, standing under the protection of the holy angels by whom we are surrounded, and under the action of the grace of the Holy Spirit which we have been vouchsafed to receive—we do not become even like those who were before grace, that is, before Christ, but we remain in carelessness, and disdain and transgress the commandments of God?

And that we, if we are careless about our salvation, will be punished more than those who sinned before Christ, the Apostle Paul indicates when he says: *If the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation* (Hebrews 2:2-3).



The creation of Adam and Eve, overshadowed by the Redemption of mankind through the Cross of Jesus Christ. Russian icon of the 16th century.

And thus, each one of us, no matter what transgression he might have fallen into—let him not accuse Adam, but let him reproach himself. And let him show true and worthy repentance like Adam, if he desires to be vouchsafed the Kingdom of Heaven. Amen.

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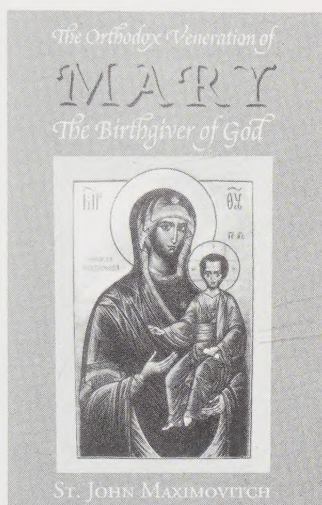
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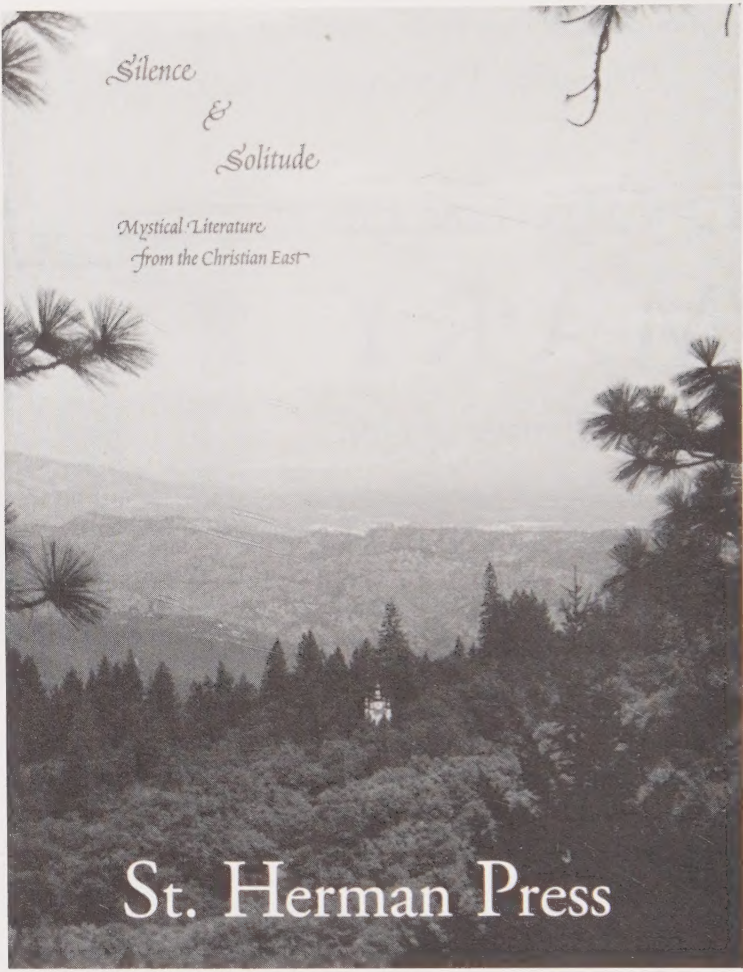
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